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# J E S S

BITS OF WAYSIDE GOSPEL



# JESS

## BITS OF WAYSIDE GOSPEL

BY

JENKIN LLOYD JONES

New York

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TO

H. M. S.

THE GENIAL COMPANION AND OPEN-EYED  
INTERPRETER OF THE WAYSIDE

“Long have I loved what I behold,  
The night that calms, the day that cheers;  
The common growth of mother earth  
Suffices me — her tears, her mirth,  
Her humblest mirth and tears.

“The dragon’s wing, the magic ring,  
I shall not covet for my dower,  
If I along that lowly way  
With sympathetic heart may stray,  
And with a soul of power.”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.



SERMONS, all of them, but sermons found out of doors during the occupied vacancies miscalled "vacations." They were once delivered to a Chicago audience, and are now redelivered to a reading audience in the hope of quickening a love for Nature in her everyday and near aspects, for the Human Nature that is always at hand, and for the Science that translates these near marvels into near beauties and high duties, emphasizing thereby the Religion which includes all those that love and serve.

Acknowledgments are due Miss Evelyn H. Walker of the Publication Committee of All Souls Church, without whose painstaking labor these manuscripts could not have been prepared for the press, and to the Publishers whose copyrighted poems are here used.

J. Ll. J.



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JESS

“God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our  
fear,

To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

\* \* \* \* \*

“What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors  
great and small,

Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth  
appal?”

ROBERT BROWNING.

## JESS

IN the June of 1889, some of the friends with whom I have taken many an excursion into the fertile fields of literature and up the easier hillslopes of science,—with whom it is still my privilege to work, and for whom I am glad to grow old,—startled me with a kindness that, for the time being, may I confess, seemed a burdensome token of affection. They presented me with a purse, accompanied with the imperative command, “Go, get thee a horse.” This was opening a closed door in my heart. It was arousing abandoned dreams and suggesting forbidden pleasures. It came like the sweet, high temptation that disturbs the cloistered retirement of the voluntary exile of him who has fled the world that he might serve it. I, who was born and bred on the farm, who had had childhood companionship with horses, and who, during my three years’ experience in the artillery service, had learned the comradeship possible between a soldier and his

horse, now resented in my heart as a forbidden pleasure, a dangerous concession to the pleasure-loving side of my life, the prospect of a saddle-horse all my own. It was a luxury not becoming to me, an indulgence which I felt I could not afford, either in point of time or in point of money. But there was no alternative left me, and I went in quest of my "white elephant."

What solemn weeks were those in which I went jockeying from stable to stable, from one auction sale to another; how attentive the dealers became, how ready they were to serve. At almost any hour of any day a saddle-horse might be seen in front of my study door, a horse sent around by some dealer, "thinking I might like him." Questions of color, size, and gait became absorbing ones. There were several which my judgment approved. But early in the quest a six-year-old mare, a little undersized, but alert, clean-limbed, supple, nervous, albeit of the gentle, cossetting kind, had captured my heart. I tried to choose some one of the other horses, because this one was too expensive, too spirited; in short, too much to my liking. From the first, though greatly excited to find herself in the noise of a great city, at the end of the alarming tortures of a railroad ride,



she seemed to confide in me. The experimental rides were very promising, and, after three weeks of resistance, judgment surrendered to affection, and the proud, timid, alert little creature was mine. In memory of an earlier love, a favorite of the farm home, she was named "Jess," a name suggestive of the political campaign of 1856. The name written long would be "Jessie Fremont," that of the admired wife of the mountain pathfinder.

In two days Jess and I started out on our first tramp. We soon understood each other. I think the affection was mutual. We had not been on the road three hours before I discovered that she had adopted me as I had her. We rested each other often by my breaking the ride with long walks. I found that she needed no leading strings; faithful as a dog, she followed wherever I went. Hundreds of miles, during the four years of our summer companionship, she followed me without word or bridle. Often in my musings I would forget all about my silent companion; suddenly recalling myself, I would look around, wondering whether she had resented the neglect and abandoned me; but always she was close at hand. Sometimes she, too, would be lost in

revery, would forget her surroundings, and would be found dreaming along, four, five, or more rods behind. Sometimes an occasional bush or bough would cause her to turn aside for a mouthful, but never would she so far forget her obligations as to stoop for a mouthful of grass, although she always might. But when I stopped, thus awakening her to a consciousness of time and place, like a delinquent child she would quicken her step, hasten to me and place her head on my shoulder in gentle reconciliation. Jess had a timid nature; she was often afraid, always apprehensive, but she seldom lost her self-control while on the road, and was always strengthened by my presence. In the country the big boulders by the roadside were always uncanny monstrosities to her, but she never doubted my wisdom when driving or riding, and always trusted my leading when walking.

It was touching to note her desire to be close to me when in the neighborhood of these weird fragments of old and remote formations, witnesses of awful upheavals and strange glacial transportation. When the rocks were very big and the road was very rough, she would press me hard, as if beseeching me to mount her that we might

become the six-limbed centaur, two animals with one consciousness, a double organism with one will, competent to cope with whatever goblins might spring from the supernatural world. She was always grateful for the privilege of carrying me through ominous places. It was safer thus, she must have thought. I shall never forget the illustration of trust she manifested when we first crossed the Blue Mounds, one of our favorite haunts. This is one of Wisconsin's few mildly-successful approaches to mountain scenery. I made the ascent on foot, consulting her comfort. The road is neither very difficult nor very rugged, and in an hour I was at the top. But to my surprise I found that the poor creature to whom I had given no thought, no word of recognition or touch of sympathy, was with me on the summit, dripping with sweat and trembling with excitement. It was a cool afternoon, but there was not a dry hair on her. What had been an exhilaration to me had been intense excitement to my faithful friend. How welcome was my word and how reassuring was my touch! The descent was through the wooded density of the west face, as the ascent had been over the rocky nakedness of the east. My heart is moved

at this hour when I think of the comfort I was able to give that sensitive creature by simply carrying the bridle-rein on my arm as we descended. How subtle are the currents of sympathy! upon what slender wires are the electric currents of companionship transmitted! Jess was timid, but trustful; she had many a faithless moment, but her faithfulness never deserted her, and so she exemplified the faith we all should seek — the Faith that makes Faithful.

Jess was obedient, but not because she had no will to subdue, no tempestuous purposes and longings of her own. She had a strong head, and she knew as well as any horse of character what it was to take the "bit in her teeth"; and a few times in our intercourse, and many times in her dealings with others, it came to a clear question of strength as to whether the one who held the reins or the one who held the bit should win. In our travelling I think we both found much amusement in trying to discover one another's will. And now as I look back upon that silent companionship, it gives me great pleasure to think how often I was able to respect her will, as she always respected mine when it was clearly understood. How many a time, as we

jogged along, did she halt at the cross-roads for the almost imperceptible hint, with knee or bridle-rein, or the slightest declension of the body, as to which of the two roads we would take. And many times also did we come to the parting of the ways at which Jess had a decided opinion as to the proper way to go, and great was my pleasure when I might respect her opinion in the matter.

Broadly speaking, Jess was more highly civilized than I was, at least in the months of July and August. Of two roads she always preferred the one that led into the haunts of human nature, while I preferred the shady glens of nature. She preferred a well-graded highway; I loved the winding cow-paths and the grass-grown byways. Jess was always cheered by the sight of a village, and her spirits came up when once within the limits of a town. In the country she took the easy and natural trot, and I, somewhat accustomed to Browning's verse and Whitman's lines, found her rhythmic trot exhilarating and altogether comfortable; but once in the town, she would always assume the purely artificial, the acquired skill of the "single-foot."

Jess early learned the providence of the wind-

mill in our western landscape, and half a mile away I have known her to quicken her pace with the prospect of the cooling draught suggested by the distant spectre that, like a great animated butterfly, opened its wings to the summer breeze. Disappointed was she if the gate was closed, but she would promptly try to take the position which would enable her rider to open the gate without dismounting. It was a long mental process for the poor horse's brain to connect the clatter of the wheel above with the cooling draught in the trough below, but she finally made the connection, and would wait when necessary, with fear and trembling, the starting of the mill. She always felt like running away, but never quite did, and when the water came she would cautiously but gratefully venture to drink. But I am sure she was always thankful when she found that the pumping had been done before she arrived. She was always pleased when I, too, drank, and was disappointed if I did not dismount at a spring to drink with her. When I bathed my hands and face, she too would plunge her nose deep in and revel in the bath. When we reached the stream, if I would only dismount she would gladly refresh herself by lying down

in it, quite unmindful of the dry-goods that might be attached to the saddle.

I said that Jess had a will of her own. Only once in all our intercourse did this become a wilfulness that triumphed over the spirit of obedience. She had espied the windmill afar off; we had already made our twenty miles, and it was nearing noon. We were both thinking of dinner. We stopped to drink near a magnificent barn, but a miserable house. The barn door was open. The air was fragrant with the smell of new-mown hay, but the aroma from the kitchen was not so inspiring. The outlook for Jess was most satisfactory; for her rider it was dubious, and he concluded to push on. To the intense disappointment of his silent companion, he started on afoot. Without a word of apology or command he passed out of the yard, through the gate, into the road, and then looked back. Jess had not started; she was looking wistfully into the barn. I spoke to her; she shook her head impatiently, and took a few steps toward the barn. I called authoritatively. It was a critical moment; the haymakers were watching us with an amused expectation that I would have to back down and return for my horse. I started on

down the road, and to their surprise and my great relief, Jess, with drooping head and spiritless gait, reluctantly turned to the road and followed, like a sulky child, a long way behind.

All this while I felt that the outcome was still dubious, but I walked on, hoping she would forget the barn. A hot quarter of a mile of dusty road, and then came the shady woods at the edge of which I meant to mount and hurry along to wherever our dinner might be. Jess was a long way behind, six or eight rods. When I stopped she stopped, and when I spoke, instead of the usual prompt response she shook her head. We stood a full minute, both suffering acutely from different anxieties. I did not want to be beaten, or to lose my horse; she did not want to disobey, neither did she want to lose her dinner. I called in vain, and when I started to go toward her the scales turned, and the strong will of the horse triumphed; she turned, and with a brisk trot retraced the quarter of a mile of dusty road and entered the barn unbidden. I followed sheepishly, too much amused to be angry. The farmer greeted me afar with a jeer, "That's the time you got left, sir, I think." I thought Jess would restore something of my self-



respect by appearing guilty and somewhat afraid of me, but there were no signs of either. With her mouth full of delicious clover she turned her bright eyes upon me in perfect satisfaction, and said as plainly as a horse could say : " Don't be a fool, now. Take this bit out of my mouth, and you go and get your dinner." Contrary to all rules of horsemanship, I did not punish, and I did not have my own way, but gracefully surrendered and took Jess's advice. The confident way in which she banked, not only on my good sense but also my good nature, is a source of pride and satisfaction to me to this day.

Says Colonel Dodge of the United States service, " Never solicit a battle with a horse, but when it is on never give up unless you want to lose your power over that horse ever after." I violated the colonel's rule. The penalty did not follow. Jess and I never alluded to that affair again, and I think our mutual respect was increased by the experience. A thousand similar temptations came afterward. She followed me for hundreds of miles under trying circumstances, but she never deserted me again, never disappointed me or betrayed my trust. My pathway through life has been lined with friends good

and true, helpers faithful and loyal. I am ungrateful to none of them when I put my loving and loyal Jess, the silent companion of the road, to whom I could give so little, from whom I received so much, alongside of and with the most faithful friends of my life.

I wish I could prove what is so clear to me, that this trust of Jess which overcame her fear, that this loyalty which directed and often overcame her ardent and impulsive desires and wishes, was rooted in intelligence. There is no more exploded and unphilosophic distinction in all the realms of psychology than the old distinction between instinct and reason, by means of which man flatters himself with an imaginary chasm between himself and the brute. Was it not an act of judgment, aye, a long process of reasoning, that connected the windmill with the water, that overcame the terror of the clatter and gave her courage to wait while the pump was doing its work?

When I first began to ride her, my third leg, the indispensable cane that pieces out an ankle with an army memory, was a great annoyance to her, an ever present menace. But there came a time when she realized that the cane was of service to me and no harm to her, and many a time

have I been reminded of my carelessness by her unwillingness to start while my cane was left on the ground ; often did she remind me that I had thoughtlessly dropped it, by stopping abruptly in the road and waiting for me to discover my loss and regain my property. Once I remember she broke from her easy gait into an abrupt halt. I rebuked her, man fashion, and urged her on. She moved with stiff and reluctant step, her ears turned back in manifest displeasure. She was loath to resume the springing gait which usually made her back so delightful. I thought she was getting lame, and looked to her shoes. Some time after this, when I had forgotten her discomfort, I suddenly discovered that my overcoat was missing from the cantle of my saddle. It was evident that she had not yet forgotten it. With a glad "I told you so" air, she accepted my slightest invitation to retrace her steps, something which under ordinary circumstances she never could respect, and with eager, far-reaching strides she covered the intervening half-mile or more and brought up with a toss of her head beside the bundle, of which she would have been very suspicious if she had not known perfectly well what it was.

Once, and once only, before I had "found my seat," as horsemen say, and we had become the two animals with one consciousness, or, rather, the one animal with the body of a horse and the head of a man, Jess's back grew sore under the saddle. A liveryman at Woodstock, Illinois, gave us a piece of old linen to wear under the saddle-blanket. It proved cooling and comfortable. We wore it for two or three weeks, and Jess resented the saddle without it. It was not until after several attempts to leave the cloth behind, and I was perfectly sure it was no longer necessary, that I had the hardihood to act against her judgment. Two years afterward I was in the same town again, driving her this time in harness. She found her way directly to that stable on a back street, and when unhitched went straight to the stall wherein the healing linen was applied. Perhaps she missed, as I did, the good Samaritan that poured oil on her wounds.

When driving, it was my habit always to walk up the steep hills, and when riding to walk down them. Jess early learned the propriety of this procedure. With the carriage she would always stop at the foot of the hill to invite me out, and with the saddle she would stop at the top to

let me down ; and she never reversed her invitations.

She certainly had a remembering heart. Once, while waiting for a ferry in the bottom woods of the Wisconsin River, we were terribly assailed by the mosquitoes, so vigorous at sunset. I cut a big brush, needing both hands to handle it, and I lashed her with it, while she, the nervous creature that usually jumped at the crackling of the smallest switch, gratefully rubbed her nose against my face. Ever after, when mosquitoes bothered, she would carry me under the first convenient tree and stop for me to cut the brush.

But enough has been said to show how gentle were her ways to me, how real was the intimacy between us. I have called it a silent companionship, but it was not silent on my part. When we were alone on the road I talked to her much. I sang to her and shouted to her. I do not think she understood what I said ; I am quite sure she understood why I said it. She may not have understood my words, but I know she understood my noise, and liked it. She was a single rider horse. No one ever found her quite the saddle-beast she came to be to me. I am no expert horseman, but I did give to her gentle handling,

a uniform and firm hand, and what was more, I presumed much on her intelligence. I trusted to her honor and she did not betray me. She responded to the call from above. Perhaps all sentient beings are more ready to do that than we know.

During the World's Fair summer, Jess was happy in the horse's terrestrial paradise, a clover field with running waters. She was buoyant with life, overflowing with spirits, ready for another campaign through the woods and over the hills, wherever and whenever her human comrade liked to go. In an exuberant moment that marvellous frame, so responsive, so agile, so electric, gave itself to play. In a wild scamper she flew down the steep hillside, around the field and up to the barn. And lo, when the man appeared, Jess was holding up one delicate foreleg, clean and smooth as a sword-blade. She whinnied pitifully. Every nerve was quivering with pain. I was busy working in the great city of Chicago, for the time being the capital city of the world, the audience chamber of humanity, the great cathedral of universal religion. During the next four weeks of great suffering and tender nursing I heard but little of her. Kind hearts

stood between my heart and its pain, but at last I learned that Jess was getting no better and suffering much, and so I left my hurrying work in the busy crowds and went to see my poor friend.

In the very early morning, when the world was all fresh and the fields cool with dew, I found her blanketed, lying on the lawn, stretched at full length, breathing heavily, suffering much. She was pitifully emaciated. Her poor body was covered with bed-sores and the knee terribly swollen and throbbing. As I approached she lifted a languid head and dropped it again. I spoke, and this time the head came up more quickly, the eye brightened with the old light of reciprocation and tenderness, and she curved her neck for the caress. I plucked some fresh clover ; she ate it from my hand and seemed for a moment to forget her pain. Perhaps a flush of hope came into both hearts, but it was only for an instant. The hardest thing to bear was to think of the month of intense and useless suffering she had endured. Within two hours the kindly bullet had brought the end.

A post-mortem examination of the knee showed that the marvellous mechanism, the

wonderful adjustment, had been hopelessly marred; the curiously-wrought knee-cap, or that which answers for it in the horse's anatomy, had been cracked, broken in a dozen pieces. It was evident that the thousand pounds, moving with such terrible momentum down the steep hill, had been stopped by the agile will and prompt nervous system with such playful abruptness that it had cracked the bones in the leg as a child cracks a hickory nut.

I never knew how fast Jess could go. I never wanted to know. Doubtless, before I knew her she had speed enough to tempt the trainer, but probably falling short of eminence in that direction, she was allowed to fall back into a more benign career, and thus she became mine. But in the end, those nerves that were more delicate than watchsprings, sinews strong as silk, bones as fine as steel, wrought her undoing. The over-excellency of the creature brought the untimely death. Like some quadrupedal Keats, she died from too much life. She went down to pain and death in her over-sympathetic youth.

Under the over-arching branches of a splendid willow we buried the body of Jess, and that



which in life made the human heart more serene and the human mind more receptive has deepened the green of the leaves and made somewhat more hospitable the leafy bowers that form the home haunts of singing birds. Other willows, gracious and noble, hold high their wavy branches in the beautiful valley, but to me at least this willow is invested with a tenderness, bathed with a beauty, and clothed with a suggestiveness denied the others.

The trees and the flowers, the shaded roadside, the happy cattle in the clover fields, the morning song of the birds, the searching and far-reaching cry of the whip-poor-will, the busy, kind, human folk, are still left for me in my summer haunts, but I shall ever miss that silent companionship that for four summers went with me over the hills and dales of Wisconsin, through the haunts of busy men, into the solitudes of busier nature. Jess, my companion of many hundreds of miles of happy travel, will accompany me no more in my quest for bodily strength, mental clearness, and spiritual peace. Her elastic step will not disturb the morning dew; her dainty ear will not catch the noonday

hum of the reaper; her alert eye will not scan the evening horizon with unfeigned anxiety to find the big barn or the country hamlet that would give us the hearty meal and well-earned slumber of the night. Something has gone out of those hills and valleys, out of the world, never to return. But Jess abides, at least in one heart made more open to fellowship, more tender to suffering, and more quick to feel the woes of all sentient beings. May I hope she will still live in this story of mine, to plead with others for thoughtfulness and kindness to that noble animal, the horse?

I offer no apology for this intrusion upon your attention with so commonplace a theme; indeed, I do not think you will so consider it. I believe you have already discovered the purpose of this narrative, too personal though it may be. I have told it because I would fain awaken through it a deeper appreciation of the marvelous and the beautiful revealed in the horse, which I regard as one of the noblest products of nature. All things considered, I believe that the climax of animal mechanism among quadrupeds is reached in the horse. He is a living dynamo, a battery of force, accurate, responsive,

intelligent, loyal. His defence lies in his swiftness. He has held his place in the struggle for existence by virtue of his timidity, and yet cowboys and cavalrymen train their horses so that they will lie down and let their masters shoot over them; so that they will carry the cannon before whose fire they learn to stand unintimidated. Well does the Koran call the horse "a condensation of the south-west wind." And the same book represents the Deity as saying to the horse, "Thou shalt be for man a source of happiness and wealth; thy back shall be a seat of honor, and thy belly of riches; every grain of barley given to thee shall purchase indulgence for the sinner." The Arabian legends say, "The finest horses are needed in heaven to carry angels." In the Hebrew legend, fiery horses carried Elijah to the sky. Indeed, we must turn to the high poetry of the Bible to find the finest description of this noble animal. Note the incomparable lines of Job:

"Hast thou given the horse strength ?

Hast thou clothed his neck with his trembling mane ?

Hast thou taught him to bound like the locust ?

How majestic his snorting ! how terrible !

He paweth in the valley ; he exulteth in his strength,

And rusheth into the midst of arms.  
He laugheth at fear ; he trembleth not,  
And turneth not back from the sword.  
Against him rattle the quiver,  
The flaming spear, and the lance.  
With rage and fury he devoureth the ground ;  
He will not believe that the trumpet soundeth.  
At every blast of the trumpet, he saith, Aha!  
And snuffeth the battle afar off, —  
The thunder of the captains, and the war-shout.”

Under the old Saxon law, the damage caused by destroying a horse was thirty shillings ; an ox, thirty pence ; a pig, eightpence, and a man, twenty shillings. In the laws of Hywel dda, Howell-the-Good, the great Cambrian law-giver of the ninth century, there were penalties for working a blistered horse : fourpence when the hair was rubbed off, eightpence if the skin was forced into the flesh, sixteenpence if the flesh was forced to the bone. Under this law a horse must not be fastened to a plough, so high was his dignity.

How interwoven with the story of human valor is that of the valiant horse ! The great Alexander, the conqueror of worlds, fitted himself for his life's work by breaking colts. The boy tamed the high-mettled Bucephalus by turn-

ing his head from his own shadow and giving him the road. The Cid, the indomitable, provided in his will that Bavioca, his old charger, should be buried in a deep grave. "For," said he, "a shameful thing it were that he should be eaten by dogs." It was a horse that carried the white-plumed knight, Henry of Navarre, into the thickest of the fight. Richard the Lion-hearted had his "White Surrey," William III. his "Sorrel," and Wellington, the great "Iron Duke," had his "Copenhagen." General Taylor rides through the pages of history on "Old Whitey." Grant's horse was trusted next to his rider. Robert E. Lee's spirit entered into his faithful veteran horse "Traveller," and the fame of Phil Sheridan is no safer than that of

"The steed that saved the day  
By carrying Sheridan into the fight  
From Winchester, twenty miles away."

And still the horse is daily abused, overloaded, underfed, beaten by cruel drivers, gagged, nagged, and maimed by women whose silliness leads to atrocities as brutal as those of the drayman. The inhumanities of the docked tail, and the barbarities of the over-check, are paraded on our boulevards every hour of the day by so-called

gentlemen and gentlewomen, proving thereby their empty heads and cold hearts and the essential cruelties of "polite society."

I have told the story of Jess, hoping that it may do something to increase a sense of the sanctities of life, all life, in our hearts. Jess is no solitary horse, no exceptional one. Dr. Edward Emerson, the son of Ralph Waldo, riding to relieve suffering in a cold, dark, and stormy night, found his horse slipping under him. They both fell into the ditch from which the horse recovered himself, while the rider lay there with a broken leg. But the faithful animal stood there in the pitiless storm beside his helpless master until the slow relief came. When General Gillespie of the English army fell in the Indian war, the privates of the Eighth Dragoons bought his old horse, and he always marched at the head of the regiment, taking his stand by the colors and receiving the salute on review. When the regiment was ordered home, they provided a comfortable paddock for the old veteran, but when the corps was gone his appetite failed. One day he broke from his groom, galloped to his old position on the parade grounds, neighed aloud, dropped down and died.

It would be a noticeable and unjustifiable omission if I failed in this connection to allude to that other "Jess" who has come to warm the hearts of all readers of good books, since we laid the bones of my beloved Jess to rest under the roots of the gracious willow. Of course I refer to the "Jess" of the good Scotch physician of the countryside of whom Ian Mac-laren has told us in "The Bonnie Brier Bush," that most human and humane of recent books.

"‘A’ wadna like ye tae sell Jess, for she’s been a faithfu’ servant, an’ a freend tae. There’s a note or two in that drawer a’ savit, an’ if ye kent ony man that wud gie her a bite o’ grass and a sta’ in his stable till she followed her maister,’—said the good Doctor McClure on his death-bed. A few days later, as the coffin passed the stable door, a horse neighed within, and every man looked at his neighbor. It was the old mare crying to her master. Drumsheugh took her to his own barn, where she had soft, dry straw to lie on and such things as horses love to eat. But the faithful horse languished, and in the night-time she was heard crying as if she expected to be taken out for some sudden journey. The Kildrummie veterinary said:—

‘A’ve seen it aince afore. Gin she were a Chreestan instead o’ a horse, ye micht say she wes dying o’ a broken hert.’ And a week after the good Doctor fell on sleep Jess was resting at last, but her eyes were open and her face was turned to the door.”

I have ventured to tell these stories of Jess and her peers, hoping they will help us to realize that this kinship with all sentient beings is a part of the modern gospel revealed by science and foretold by the most ancient prophecy, the pitying paganism that is thoughtful of the lower life, and gentle toward our dumb fellow-citizens in this commonwealth of the Lord. “Aha!” sneered the Arab at the cruelty of the London horseman, “it is not in your Book not to hurt the horse!” But it is in our Book. Does it not say, “A merciful man is merciful to his beast”? But we do not live up to the Book.

Finally, I have told the story of Jess, that it might suggest that subtle thought which brings reassurance to the human soul as it looks forward into the mysteries beyond. I know not what realities await us; I only know that the qualities upon which I base my hope of immortality I found far along in their development in



my companion of the road and the many humble acquaintances we made together. The buoyant thrush, singing her song most clearly when the stress of wind and fall of rain is upon her, is herself an "intimation of immortality," to use Wordsworth's great phrase. "Love me, love my dog," is the chivalric demand of man upon his brother man. Some of these days this will be the spiritual demand of man from his God. I would not be importunate or impatient; but an immortality that leaves out the singing, loving world below, curtails my dream and hope of the serving, thinking, and growing world beyond. When Buffalo Bill buried his favorite horse at sea, after wrapping him around with the American flag, rough hands wiped the tears from cheeks unfamiliar to that dew of the soul, and the gallant scout said as he looked at his old horse:—

"Charley, but for your willing speed and tireless courage, I would many years ago have lain low as you are now, and my Indian foe would have claimed you for his slave. Yet you never failed me, Charley, old fellow. I have had many friends, but very few of whom I would say that. Men tell me you have no soul, but if there be

a heaven and scouts can enter there, I'll wait at the gate for you, old friend."

Here is no irreverence, no profanation of the higher hopes or tenderer griefs of the soul. If our lesser loves are rudely dealt with, the more sacred sanctities of the human heart will shortly be profaned. Surely, —

"A horse misused upon the road  
Calls to heaven for human blood.  
Each outcry of the hunted hare  
A fibre from the brain doth tear ;  
A skylark wounded on the wing  
Doth make a cherub cease to sing."

One thing is sure, and that is worth more than the question of immortality. Such sensibilities as are aroused by this new thought of universal comradeship to all living things, will make life heavenly with or without heaven. And the absence of these sensibilities will make life earthly, sordid, hellish, no matter how many heavens we may go to.

Gentleness and sympathy are not voluntary graces which the soul may accept or refuse at its pleasure. They are rather the exactions of the universe. He who refuses them a place in his life cheats God and debases his own soul.

A man must not only be humane to his wife,—he has gone but a little farther than the brute if he has not got farther than that,—but he must be humane to his hired man, his cows, his dog, and companionable with his horse. He must recognize the rights of the dumb brutes of the barnyard, he must realize the mighty sweep of that law of rectitude that includes the very chickens in his doorway and the squirrels that play in the tree-tops. Then it will not be difficult to protect our children from the cruelties of the factory and our women from the degradations of the sweat-shop. The Apocalyptic dreams of man rest upon a revelation written in the humble text of the kennel and the dove-cote; aye, farther down, in the petals of the lily, the roots of the rose. Beneath the roots in the clay and sand and the filtering raindrop, the enlightened soul reads the antediluvian message that speaks of the primeval sanctity underneath all things, the eternal God that was, is, and shall be, “in whom we live, move, and have our being.”

There is another link in this story of Jess which I give, not only for completeness' sake, but because it adds another illustration of the

silent companionship that binds man to beast, the horse to his rider. For many years I have been the recipient of occasional letters, searching scraps from newspapers, and other reachings after fellowship, from one who was drawn to me through the columns of the paper it is my task and privilege to edit. They come from a veteran of the Union army, a broken brother, a comrade who has passed through the terrible fire of the battles which are the price of mental as well as of physical freedom. Through the long years that have elapsed since the terrible day at Stone River, when the fragment of a shell did its fell work upon the mystic brain tissues that are the trysting places of thought, this comrade and brother has been pathetically waiting for the release that death brings from pain and solitude. Through the rifts in the cloud that overhangs his mind he has been sending me messages, often written on stray scraps of paper. Sometimes the thought is incoherent, oftentimes the writing is illegible. The communications come now from asylum, now from hospital, and again from a soldiers' home as far removed as possible from the inhospitalities of our northern climate.

While in the midst of the first preparation of

my sketch of Jess, I received from this pathetic source a weird contribution to my discourse. A note bearing date of June 5th, 1894, came from a distant southern city addressed to the "Editor of *Unity*." It said: "Fearing you might not get my horse's photograph, I got out of bed, forced food down a parched throat, and came over a mile through the hot sun to secure the mailing of this. *Unity* has been my food while I have been dying, crayfish fashion, and I want you to get the picture." The next day an express package arrived, containing the tin-type of a spirited horse, bridled and saddled with a military outfit. The picture was accompanied with various unsuccessful attempts at composition; but among the papers were two tolerably clear letters addressed to Jess, purporting to be written to her by the spirit of "Frank Wood," the transfigured horse of this long-suffering soldier of the Union army. The only knowledge my correspondent could have had of the silent companion of my midsummer wayfaring was through such hints as only a careful reader could glean from the columns of *Unity*. Perhaps in these weeks there may have been a touch of weariness discoverable in the editorial columns. Perhaps the approach-

ing midsummer rest provoked the quaint fancies embodied in these letters. Evidently at the time of writing he did not know that Jess, too, had passed over to the great majority, and had joined his "Frank Wood" in whatever heaven there may be in store for faithful horses. The first letter to Jess bore the date of May 5, 1894, showing that for more than a month his mind had been brooding upon the memories of his horse and his fancies concerning mine. The first letter ran thus: —

"DEAR JESS: — I hear your master is sick. Now I want you to be kinder to him than I was to mine. I send you my tin-type taken in Nashville in 1863. Your master has been kind to my master. My master was kind to me. Often he took his gum cover off for me in the storm. Instead of throwing my ears of corn on the ground he would cut them in little pieces for me and feed me out of his hand. One day, just as the sun was lingering on Lookout Mountain, master rode out beyond Waldon's Ridge to a lone grave marked by a wooden head-board. He knelt by it and cried as though a great storm pressed on him. I laid my nose on his shoulder and whinnied. I had often seen him go to the sick friend there buried. He was a gentle spirit crushed to the earth, not killed by a foe. Poor master seemed to wish he was there, but he was to live to see a beautiful home made desolate. Dear Jess, we bear our burdens on the outside, they on the inside. Thank God for being a brute. Be kind, be gentle, be obedient. As a run-

ning soldier of the regular army said to my master, 'Our glory here when alive, yours there when dead. So I run.' So our suffering is here, theirs there. Be as you wish I had been.

“FRANK WOOD.

“P. S. Do you know I think that we whom men call ‘brutes’ have the best time. We are of money value; are taken care of. We bear our burdens on our backs, they in their hearts. We have no fear of the future. Our all is now. Their now is nothing. Their all is in the future. Our bodies may suffer for want of oats and hay, as so many of our kind did at Stone River; their souls starve for something far away that they value more than now.”

The second letter bore the date of July 4th, 1898, and was evidently composed in anticipation of the patriotic celebration. It ran thus:

“JESS: — Although I have long been home in heaven I send you a message on this Liberty Day. Your master is working for a greater liberty than you celebrate. Thirty years ago master and I were in Nashville, Tennessee. Master talked to a captain who was at Vicksburg thirty-one years ago. He said he was so weary and hungry he did not care to dodge the shell the blue-coats fired at the gray. Another captain told of his Vicksburg experience. He had been up two nights, and when he asked for relief he was given one hour in which to sleep. When these human bipeds suffer so much for liberty, we quadrupeds ought to help them. Your master is fighting in

a struggle greater than ours, as much greater as the hawk is greater than the cage, the mind greater than the body. So again I say be kind, gentle, obedient. I am sorry I was not thus always. Once I thought I was smart and that I would not be a slave; I would run away and take 'Bet' with me. But she said, 'Stay. Our master is kind.' I had learned to untie any knot he could make. One day just at dark master got on me and rode out alone. He was stopped by a little negro boy. He dismounted and crawled to the top of the hill. He came back, mounted me, turned and ran me as fast as I could run to a hill; then seeing some men he ran me to them and jumped off. One of the men caught me. He ran to a tent. Then all the men came around, and mounting horses began to run them in all directions. All night long this was going on. No sleep, no rest to them. I lay down. Almost as soon as light came all began to move. The men went first. We then went in another direction with the mules and wagons. Then they arranged the wagons so the mules were behind them. Master tied me with an easy knot to a wagon. He lay down on a fallen tree. I thought I would be smart and untie myself. I was then starting to run, when his colored boy caught me. He tied me to a small tree and took a long time. By and by some horses came to meet me. They did not stop, but ran, and the men began to scamper. All was confusion. I saw master jump up and go to where I wished I was tied. When he saw where I was he turned and went back. Then without hat or coat he ran for me. He could not untie me, but pulled up the bush and jumped on me. He must have risked much, as all the men cheered when he rode up safe. It was to save me that he must have tied me. I was better after that. And so I say be



gentle, be kind. Your master's health depends on you. He is at a grander work than my master was. Yours,

“FRANK WOOD.”

Behold, what sacred weavings cross the threads of life. How near us lies the realm of mystery. Not only in the night but in the daytime the mysterious ships approach each other, salute, and pass. Try what figure we will, be it woven fabric or open sea, they are all inadequate. Whether we try to fathom the blind movement in the heart of a fractious horse or the awful agony of a man suffering from the shipwreck of faith and shattered hearthstones, our plumb-line is too short. Everything from the trusting love of a horse up to the divine expiation on Calvary, everything from the long homesickness of the dog that walked from Kansas to Illinois to join his master up to the world-renouncing love of Prince Siddârtha, the Light of Asia, bespeaks the unity of law and love, suggests harmony in complexity, simplicity in diversity. It is the harmony of progress, the simplicity of ethics and the sublimity of reverence.

“Restless, restless, speed we on, —  
Whither in the vast unknown ?

Not to you and not to me  
    Are the sealèd orders shown:  
But the Hand that built the road,  
    And the Light that leads the feet,  
And this inward restlessness,  
    Are such invitation sweet,  
That where I no longer see,  
    Highway still must lead to Thee! ”

## REALIZING LIFE

## SUNDAY ON THE HILL-TOP

Only ten miles from the city, —  
And how I am lifted away  
To the peace that passeth knowing,  
And the light that is not of day !

All alone on the hill-top !  
Nothing but God and me,  
And the springtime's resurrection,  
Far shinings of the sea,

The river's laugh in the valley,  
Hills dreaming of their past ;  
And all things silently opening,  
Opening into the Vast !

Eternities past and future  
Seem clinging to all I see,  
And things immortal cluster  
Around my bended knee.

That pebble — is older than Adam !  
Secrets it hath to tell ;  
These rocks — they cry out history,  
Could but I listen well.

That pool knows the ocean-feeling,  
Of storm and moon-led tide ;  
The sun finds its East and West therein,  
And the stars find room to glide.

That lichen's crinkled circle  
Still creeps with the Life Divine,  
Where the Holy Spirit loitered  
On its way to this face of mine, —

On its way to the shining faces  
Where angel-lives are led ;  
And I am the lichen's circle  
That creeps with tiny tread.

I can hear these violets chorus  
To the sky's benediction above :  
And we all are together lying  
On the bosom of Infinite Love.

I — I am a part of the poem,  
Of its every sight and sound,  
For my heart beats inward rhymings  
To the Sabbath that lies around.

Oh, the peace at the heart of Nature !  
Oh, the light that is not of day !  
Why seek it afar forever,  
When it cannot be lifted away ?

W. C. GANNETT.

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## REALIZING LIFE

What went ye out into the wilderness to see ?

MATTHEW, xi. 7.

THIS age of steam has its dangers to the intellect as well as its strain upon the body. Too great a speed sometimes paralyzes the spirit before the muscles give out. Hurry benumbs the heart more often than it exhausts the physical vitality. Popular opinion seems to expect that the travelled young man or woman will be *blasé* to all the ordinary enjoyments of life. The average day and the average road, it is assumed, will be uninteresting to such. Many boast of culture to whom the world seems scarcely more than a "sucked orange," to use Emerson's phrase.

If vacation is to bring its highest good, it must correct this tendency. It must do something toward saving us from this danger. It is but a half vacation that simply rests tired muscle or nerve; the other half must recruit mind, reinvigorate the spirit. It were better not to stop the strain of life than to find ourselves at the

end of the resting-time less ready for work, less eager for tasks, than when we stopped. An increased capacity for digestion is not much to boast of, unless there is with it a renewed relish for life, a more splendid appetite for duty. Those to whom vacation has failed to bring a fresh and overpowering sense of the opulence of nature, the wealth of life, and of their own responsibilities, have missed the reconstruction they went in search of. They have been dissipating instead of re-creating, idling instead of resting. Perhaps the highest delight that a vacation brings to busy and overworked people is the opportunity of feasting the eyes once more on the beauty of common things; of tuning the ear to detect the music there is in the life of ordinary men and women; of reading the poetry that is ever written between the lines of the dullest prose of common life. I fear there is a tendency in our mid-summer life to cultivate the "Rock-me-to-sleep-in-a-hammock" disposition among the few, and a grim, sullen, almost desperate sort of a "no-rest-for-the-wicked" spirit among the many, who plod through the joyless round of duties that have become drudgeries from which no blessings are expected.

What is the vacation word which we have to bring to the latter? Can we only tantalize them with glowing accounts of distant scenery and hints of luxuries, privileges, and pleasures that are beyond their reach? I rejoice in the noon-ing hour of the year which is given to many. But I remember also those who may not take the hand from the tiller, who through the heat of summer as well as the chill of winter keep the ship of life steadily on its course. I am glad nature takes no rest. The sun has had no holiday and the earth has not ceased to pursue its unhasting and unresting round. To those who have kept time with the sun and have tried to keep step with nature's ceaseless toil, I would like to bring out of my holiday a thought or two that may sanctify and ennoble their days of labor and go toward making the working days that await us all more blithe and beautiful than any found on hill-top or by water-side.

May I seek these lessons in my own experience? Through the generous kindness of my fellow-workers, already acknowledged, I was able to ride away from the city of Chicago on the tenth of July on the back of my own horse Jess, with only such equipments as previous experi-



ence had taught me were compatible with light marching, snugly stowed away in the saddle-bags. I began my journey in the beautiful parks of our city. I rode through Washington, Douglas, and Humboldt Parks and the connecting boulevards, with their shaven lawns, their highly elaborated flower-beds, and their gayly dressed children. It almost seemed reckless to turn one's back upon such tempting luxuriance as these gardens of the people offered. One was tempted to exclaim, "Who need look for better? This is good enough for me!" Once out of reach of this nature raised to its highest exponent by skilled human nature, there was nothing to expect but the prosaic dust of common country roads, the meagre privileges of poorly kept country inns, the hurried life of preoccupied people. But to these we turned.

Jess was a thoroughbred American. For the first two days she was tormented with the spirit of the age, the hurry to get there, though she, like many of the pushers and the rushers, had no idea where that "there" was, or what it would contain for her when it should be found; but with her, as with her human fellow-beings, the road was evidently a thing to be done with, and

the end of the road the thing to be desired. But well along in the third day she began to think there was no end to that road for her, and that if anything was to be gotten out of it, she must take her pleasure and her pay as she went along. Then the wayside shade and the long grass in the fence corner began to tempt her and to give her much pleasure.

The chief difference between Jess and her human kin in this respect, I fancy, lay in the fact that she learned her lesson in much less time than we do. How many of us go steaming on, champing our bits, pressing, fretting to get there, through forty, fifty, sixty years of life's road, tufted with clover, carpeted with sweet grass, shaded ever and anon with noble trees, marked with frequent surprises and tempting resting-spots, all of which we do not see and will not enjoy because of the prolonged fever for the end. When Jess had learned this lesson, the march itself became delightful, and we went on and on and on, day after day, counting valley after valley, climbing hill after hill, with no more haste, but a growing sense that here was as good as there, and that there were delights everywhere. We grew companionable, we trusted each other,

we rested each other. One walked and then both walked, until we had gone over some five hundred miles of the world together.

Mount Horeb, Mount Ida, Mount Hope, Blue Mounds, Pine Bluff, Highlands, Castle Rock, Wauwatosa, Prairie du Chien, and Port Andrew are places all unfamiliar to the tourist. They are not down in the list of summer resorts, but taken in the leisure of the country road they all have charms, histories, traditions, and romances to delight the eye and feed the mind. There were the alternations of hill and dale, rugged rocks rimming around glorious clover fields, knee-deep in which stood happy cattle high in pedigree, five hundred miles of flower-bordered road lined with blackberries, raspberries, and plums to tempt delay. But more than this, we travelled over five hundred miles of unwritten heroism and unrecorded bravery. Every crumbling log house had a story of frontier hardship, perchance of pilgrim loyalty and pioneer prophecy to tell the leisurely horseman. Climb over into the neglected burying-grounds along the way, and amid the unkempt grasses you may read names that reach back to Scandinavian fiords, Irish cabins, Scotch heather

hills or German vineyards, names that are wine to the imagination, stirring it into fancies and into tears.

Five hundred miles on horseback in Wisconsin reveals great stretches of human nature still alive and throbbing with creative forces, as well as sacred memory fields. Jess, like her rider, soon learned to have an interest in the life along the road. She loved to stop to inquire the way, and was loath to pass a team without exchanging a word. She was interested with me in the simple procession of human nature that passed in review as we travelled, — harvest hands, hay-makers, berry-pickers, women in the garden, boys hunting cows, or Shakespeare's whining schoolboy,

“creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school.”

One day we joined a funeral procession, the next we waited to see a circus pass. A camp-meeting, the Salvation Army, Professor Buckley with his educated horses and trained dogs, all fell in our way and enriched our lives. One hot afternoon we were just in time to take in the closing exercises of a sleepy little district school of twelve children, nine of them barefooted, and

the little "school ma'am" gave them each a card, such as I used to receive. She tried to make a little farewell speech, but embarrassment and tears choked her, and we helped her out. We found human nature so in love with flowers that it embowered the roughest cabin in morning-glories. We also found human nature, alas! so unsavory, barren, dirty, that it turned us away from the big house without courage to ask for the dinner we needed. We found human nature grim and selfish, tender and generous. We encountered the blight of plenty, the complacency of independent ease, and just over the way we found the generosity of pinched lives, the beneficent pity of the poor for the poor.

One night the road grew long and we fain would shorten the projected route by asking shelter along the way. The farms were ample and the farm-houses modern and roomy, but their owners one after another refused to take us in. They were not "fixed to keep travellers," they said. The fifth time the plea for the tired horse fell on unresponsive ears and the refusal was shaking our faith in human nature, when the young farmer said, "I'll tell you where you can stop,—a half mile ahead, at my mother's." And,

sure enough, we found there the promised welcome. While enjoying the bread and milk in the cozy home of the Irish widow, I asked, "How long have you lived here?" "Forty years, sir. I have raised nine boys, and buried my husband twenty years ago." The boy that directed me was a graduate of the State University. They taught him trigonometry at college, but they neglected to put in a course on hospitality. Perhaps it is expecting too much of a university to teach such high virtues to men who live in big houses and have married women who have been "off to school" and can play on the piano and read French; but the open door, spiritual and mental as well as material, of the widow's home suggests communications with heaven, and the teaching of it is worthy of a professor's chair in our colleges.

Another night found us entering a nook of bewitching loveliness at the base of a great castellated rock standing like a Titanic throne in the centre of circling strata and splendid hills, with a dashing, chattering brook of spring-water at its foot. Both horse and rider espied with joy the pretty house on the knoll and the ample barn fragrant with new-mown hay. The motherly

housewife thought we might stay. The horse more than the rider appeared to win her. But she said we must wait "until the old man comes," and the old man said no, he wasn't "fixed to keep strangers." We did not tell him that the needed "fixtures" were missing on the inside. Another and another "no" followed, and the two tired travellers climbed the hill out of that valley as darkness was settling down upon it, with the lines of the missionary hymn forcing themselves into the mind of one of the travellers,

"Where every prospect pleases,  
And only man is" — *discouraging*.

That night I slept in a trundle-bed in a Norwegian log house, and found next morning that three or four of the white-headed children had slept on the floor that I might have a bed. At breakfast the good woman urged me to take more molasses. She didn't want to take any pay, because she wasn't "fixed to keep strangers." I could not tell her how much ampler were her accommodations than those of the crusty farmer with the big barn and the white house, how much wealthier she was than he.

But what is the chief lesson of this vacation

ride? Simply this: There is much life all about us that we fail to realize. To teach us to appreciate and utilize the resources of this life is the mission of religion. We need help to realize the bigness of the world. We perhaps have dwelt too long upon the inconceivable stretches of Astronomy. We have tried to fix in our minds the distance between us and the sun. This should not exclude from our minds that higher realization of the wealth there is in the spaces which we can traverse. From Chicago to Spring Green by train is only a night's sleep, but from Chicago to Spring Green on horseback is a week full of miles, each mile of which sustains its quota of marvellous life. From Chicago to Spring Green by country road the way is lined with hundreds of schoolhouses and scores of churches, with probably a graveyard once in every six miles or less. Every quarter of a mile, or oftener, there is a home, and in these homes babes are born, children wail, and mothers weep. Around these homes cluster the hopes of spring and the disappointments of autumn, the strain of summer and the solitudes of winter. Between Chicago and Spring Green I passed through some thirty villages with their



clustered groups of workmen and workwomen, and the road I traversed is only one of the countless two-hundred-mile stretches that radiate from Chicago. Perhaps realizing the extent and content of one such route, feeling the mystery of it, letting its pains and joys, its past and present, touch one with awe, may bring God nearer, make revelation a reality and inspiration a fact of inward experience more successfully than would a course in a divinity school, and may prove a greater help to piety than knowing all about the Hebrew kings or being able to read the New Testament in the original Greek.

But marvellous and awe-inspiring as is such a stretch of space, it is still empty and barren compared to the still greater stretches that reach through any human life. It was a greater distance from the cradle of that simple school-teacher to the schoolroom than it is from Chicago to Spring Green, or even to Boston, with the Hudson River and Berkshire Hills thrown in. There are greater alternations of heights and depths, thirsting sands and blooming flowers, in the life of that unsophisticated little "school-ma'am" not yet out of her teens than nature has to give anywhere in her geological or geo-

graphical formations. The difficult thing to do is to realize, not only the extent but the variety and the beauty that are packed away within the reach of anybody, within the being of everybody.

The people of the West have heard a great deal about the monotony of western scenery. They have learned in their blindness to concede that their prairies are "stale, flat, and unprofitable" save for the purposes of pasturing cattle and raising corn. I have no reflections to make or comparisons to institute. Let not the hands say to the feet, "I have no need of you," nor the feet to the head, "I have no need of you." I simply say that the primal mission of religion is to bring a realizing sense of the world—the world of matter and of mind revealed around and within us wherever we may be, and that in proportion as we realize it we touch the hem of immensity, we are embowered in variety, we find things so interlocked, so blended, that beauty breaks upon us everywhere. The central thing in Emerson's philosophy of life is found in his oft-repeated protest against the habit of mind which is always seeking glory and beauty in some distant place, always reaching for remote revelations of nature and of God. "Why go to Italy,"

he says, "to see a sunset that you can see from your own kitchen door?" I suspect that this is the central thing in religion also, a realizing sense of the fulness of earth, an apprehension of the pregnant life that makes metropolitan to some order of living beings the oak leaf, that populates the hillock with communities which in their own way live in Parisian splendor; that recognizes in the matted sward, the pebbled beach, and slaty hill-top a carpet more exquisitely inwrought than the rarest of Persian rugs, a tessellated pavement a thousand times more varied and exquisite than any found in Roman hall or Pompeian villa.

"What a great thought of God was that when he thought a tree," says Ruskin. And a noble elm in a pasture, that beckons to its shelter with its pendulous branches, is as direct a projection out of the heart and mind of God as are the elms on Boston Common. If the one does not summon us to the silent litanies of nature's worship, we shall waste much of our vacation money in travelling to see the other. <sup>#1</sup> If the voice of the Lord is not heard in the Wisconsin pine tree by him who walks beneath it, he will hear but a faint echo of that voice in the cedars of Leb-

anon. Every place is lovely to him who has the robust piety of the ancient psalmist and knows that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," for everywhere his order shapes itself into beauty and utility.

I have not a very clear conception as to what kind of place the "desert" was that is spoken of so often in the Bible as the resort of lawgiver, prophet, and reformer, but for vacation uses I cannot think it was equal to the lake counties of Wisconsin and northern Illinois, to say nothing of New England or the Rocky Mountain region. And still in those barren fastnesses of Sinai were conceived the sublime demands of the "Ten Commandments." There did Elijah regird himself, and, after a forty days' retirement, — a good summer's vacation, — return reanimated, recruited, ready for work. I know not what happened to John the Baptist or to Jesus when they were "driven into the wilderness," but I am sure it was something that enabled them better to realize life, to feel the pressure and potency of things, something that lifted them into a sense of sanctity, a consciousness of divine nearness, of sacred realities. When one feels this, he has the

religion that John and Jesus knew of, the religion that cries, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand," the religion that says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

When shall we break the bonds of these material superstitions and find our Jordan in the nearest river available, our Horeb the first table-land we can climb? When that time comes, Bible-reading will ripen into Bible-making, and instead of studying the "prophets" as though that were the only thing we could do, we shall begin to prophesy and sing out of our own times and places, —

"Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God."

Prairie du Chien is one of the most interesting historical landmarks in Wisconsin. Situated at the junction of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers, it became one of the earliest French outposts, an important fur-trading station. As early as 1673, Louis Joliet left Quebec under orders to discover the South Sea. Taking with him Father Marquette from Mackinac, he reached the Mississippi River by way of the Wisconsin,

and at the "prairie of the dogs," or, more probably, the prairie of the wild wolves, they raised the cross and the flag of France. That flag has lost its right of possession, but the cross of the Roman church, an organization which began before France was, which I believe and hope will last in some developed form when France is not, still hold its place there. Prairie du Chien is still a stronghold of French Catholicism, an important college town of that faith.

When visiting this place on my ride, I caught sight of a most suggestive and beautiful picture. Very early after a night's rain, before the sun was up, I wandered aimlessly to the margin of the village, and came upon what, for America, was a very old church, a quaint and impressive relic of a past generation. The old minster was backed by a populous burying-ground, guarded by a forbidding high fence and filled with quaint-looking monuments, and grim, rude crosses. Through the high picket fence I saw, slowly pacing up and down the gravelled walk, the tall, gaunt form of a venerable priest, robed to the feet in the black gown of his order, the close black cap but partially confining the long flowing locks of hair white as snow. This aged

father, whose frame was perhaps two or three inches over six feet high before it was bent by age, showed no sign of that corporeal indulgence which so many of his order carry. It betokened well the spiritual adviser, the shepherd of souls. He walked with his hands behind him, his head bent as if in sweet communion with his own, the children of his heart whom he had gathered one by one into this home of the dead where soon he would join them in a well-earned rest. He was walking among his dead. He was musing upon the past. He was the priest of antiquity, the representative of a religion of tradition. Blessed old man, he had a right to such musings, and the morning sun touched with beauty no more fitting picture than when it fell upon his gray hairs amid the tombstones. If we would realize life in its fulness, we must have room in our thought and a place in our hearts for that venerable father. We must know and feel what he knew and felt. I should have liked a rosary just then, and could have easily joined in a litany to St. Augustine, St. Francis, and the rest of them. Their names and words have rimmed that plain with a more sacred halo for three hundred years, and to see Prairie du Chien

without seeing and feeling this is not to see it, although you may drink of its medicinal waters and look down upon it from its beautiful hills.

But we must realize more than this if we would realize life as it is to-day, life in its divine significance and quality. Across the way was the public school building. Early as it was, the locomotives were fuming down on the river's brink, fretting to be away with their loads of human freight, one to Dakota, the other to Chicago. I am afraid that these did not have so large a place in the life of the venerable father as they merited. He perhaps did not realize the public school and the locomotive, the Dakota farmer and the Chicago travelling man, as much as they deserved; hence his religion was imperfect. He, like the graduate of the university, for all his acquirements, would probably say to many a spiritual visitor and traveller, "We are not fixed here to entertain strangers." The Catholic church, like the University of Wisconsin, doubtless needs a professor of hospitality to teach the gospel of the open door, the piety of receptivity. The venerable "Father" communing with his dead did not fully realize life.

The Kickapoo valley is one of the noblest and



most lonely of the hard-wood forest regions of Wisconsin. Riding through this on my return from the old French town of Prairie du Chien, I saw an unkempt, barefooted native, with his fishing equipment, looking intently into what seemed an uninteresting mud-hole in the road ahead. He long continued his silent watch, and finally seated himself in a comfortable position that he might persevere at his vague vigilance. "Well, stranger, what do you expect to find in that mud-hole?" "Waa-ll, sir, I think I see some bees a waterin' theirselves here, and I thought I'd watch and see which way they went and I mout track 'em and find a bee-tree. They've got a right smart of honey laid up now. There's plenty of 'em among these bass-wood trees." Not much of a prophet was this fisherman, bee-man, and trapper, but he realized at least one thing which the brooding monk is ever in danger of forgetting, namely, that there are honey-bearing trees yet in the woods, and that if we would find them we must watch and see which way the bees fly. Though they lead us through untracked forests, and though in the pursuit we may often be scratched and baffled, there is the honey farther on. We must look

forward as well as backward, must believe in the future as in the past, must venerate the babe as well as the grandfather.

The fine task is to clothe the bee-hunter with the reverence, the courtesy, the humility of the Catholic father.

A few miles of noble forest solitudes from my bee-hunter I stopped at a log house for a drink of water, and the cordial Irish grandmother insisted on going deep into the dark woods to the spring for a fresh pailful. When on her return I confessed that I was from Chicago, her hospitalities, if possible, were doubled, because "It seems like as if I had found a neighbor. I used to live in Chicago myself, but left it in 1848 and have lived in the woods ever since. I knew Long John Wentworth mighty well, and I felt real bad when I heard of his death." She wanted much to hear how things looked in Chicago now, particularly around where the old garrison house stood, "just outside the fort, you know." Her boy, born in the woods, had been in Chicago several times. He had told her that she could not find her way there now at all, but she was positive that if they would just put her on "Clark street bridge onct" she could find her

way "to the place where the old house stood by the river on the west side." Dear old soul, it is not likely that she will ever have a chance to try to find the old place, but the Chicago in her heart is a more magnificent reality than the huge piles of brick and stone that have come to confound her landmarks since she left the western village in 1848. There may be more of life, marvel, holiness, God, in her hospitable spirit than in many of the cold piles of exclusive selfishness that adorn the Chicago avenues. She was richer in her "eighty" of good land than many of Chicago's millionnaires.

"What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" The disciples had just returned from an excursion, a long trip to the banks of the Jordan, where they had talked with the weird John, and had been reminded by Jesus that they went to see not a mere "reed shaken in the wind," not a man "clothed in soft raiment" such as is worn in kings' houses, no, not even a "prophet," but a messenger from the Most High, one who had come to prepare the way for larger and better things. So if we in our vacation wanderings see only shaking reeds, comforts, luxuries, those things which encourage self-

indulgence, increase discontent, and blind our eyes to the realities around us, it is better that we do not go. But if we can realize that not only the brave John by the Jordan, but every waving field of corn, the sweet-scented hay of the meadow, every leaf on the bough and every bird among the leaves, is a messenger direct from God, confronting us with his message, preparing his way, telling us that we do dwell in the house of the Lord, we are communicants at his table. And still more, wherever is seen the human heart revealed, whether it be in the careless child in the shade, the anxious mother in the strain of her household cares, or the finite providence of the farm-house at his chores, whether in gathering sheaves into the barn or laying the dead away in the grave, we have seen that which is more than reeds, however beautiful ; than raiment, however soft ; we have beheld messengers of the Most High preparing us to see his face, ripening us to realize the truth that no more impartial are the sun's rays than are the rays of his love, no more inclusive is the starry firmament above us than is that inner firmament of thought and duty. Varied are the trees in the forests, but more varied are the men and women of humanity ;

yet all the forest is nature's, and all men are God's.

“What went ye out into the wilderness to see?” Messengers of an untrammelled religion, teachers of undogmatic piety, a scripture not bounded by word, form, or sect, heralds of the church of progress, the church with a door as open as nature, with a dome as vast as the sky, with a hand as helpful as a mother's, a church founded on God's texts inscribed in leaf, in bird, in field, in rock, in man.

“What went ye out into the wilderness to see?” That which rebukes laziness, which condemns selfishness, humiliates pride, denies all our pretensions to exclusive monopoly either of truth, duty, or love; that which enables us to realize life, its extent, its variety, its beauty. Seeing this we should come back to our tasks prepared to work more diligently, speak more plainly, hope more earnestly, and trust more devoutly.



## A DINNER OF HERBS

Unwrap thy life of many wants and fine :  
He who with Christ will dine  
Shall see no table curiously spread,  
But fish and barley bread.  
Where readest thou that Jesus bade us pray,  
Give us our sumptuous fare from day to day ?

Why wilt thou take a castle on thy back,  
When God gave but a pack ?  
With gown of honest wear, why wilt thou tease  
For braid and fripperies ?  
Learn thou with flowers to dress, with birds to feed,  
And pinch thy large want to thy little need.

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.



## A DINNER OF HERBS

Better a dinner of herbs where love is,  
Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

PROVERBS XV. 17.

DURING my vacation ride in the summer of 1890, my good horse Jess and I had one day to cross over from one into another of the transverse valleys that open into the wider basin of the Wisconsin River. We left behind us the beautiful valley of the Lemonweir and crossed a high, rocky and wooded range of bluffs into the valley of the Baraboo. The day was very hot, the road was a rough one and would have been very lonely had not Jess and myself been on the best of terms with the countless companions in nature's household who greeted us everywhere in furs and feathers. The ascent was a long up-hill pull for two or three miles, a task which Jess and I accomplished side by side, using six feet instead of four, and then came a long ride over the wooded summit, through heavy hard-wood forests which

had been robbed of their noblest monarchs, though there were still trees enough left to carry me back to the early days of my childhood in the territorial forest of Wisconsin, when the ring of the woodman's axe was a most familiar sound, and the arrival of the new settler was marked by a new log house in the clearing encircled by the inevitable worm-fence.

Noon overtook us on the high divide when we had already travelled more than twenty miles, our limit of a proper half-day's journey. Jess had refreshed herself at a wayside trough halfway up the hill, but we were both hungry, and I was very thirsty. At last the long solitary road came upon an opening among the trees which contained a log house with its back to the road and a very little garden patch, with some chickens and a dog as evidences of civilization. Jess thought it was time to speak to somebody, — perhaps she wanted to know how far it was to the next stopping-place, — and so she turned in, walked round the house and up to the front door, which was in the back of the house, and would have walked in if I had not drawn the rein. As it was, we were on the threshold of an open door before we were discovered. We surprised the quaintest little

couple at dinner, a boy and girl who looked as if they were out playing at housekeeping just for a day. He was a small, dwarfed, squatty little man, largely hid in a big pair of boots into which he had been dropped, trouser-legs and all; with short stubbed hands, a face with the early down of a prospective beard, but already furrowed with weather and work marks which made him look prematurely old. The girl wife was fair, shy, and even younger than the boy husband, as prim and compact in her attire as he was frowsy. She was dressed in a bright madder-red dress with sleeves of whitish stuff, the whole made up in a cross between a "Mother-Hubbard" gown and a Swiss peasant waist.

I was courteously given a very warm drink of water in a very new tin dipper, and told that it was nine miles to a hotel and not much between here and there in the way of houses. As the young man returned the dipper, there was a whispered aside, followed by a prompt, "You'd better dismount and take a bite with us. There's a jag of grass in the corner of the garden which the horse can do with; we have no grain." By this time the little wife was by his side urging the hospitable invitation, adding the customary femi-

nine apology, "We haven't much to-day, but such as we have you are very welcome to." "A pair of woodpeckers like yourselves shouldn't need much," I said, "living up here close to the sky among these grand oak trees."

Of course we stayed. Jess seemed satisfied with the hay, and, after revelling in a big wash-basin full of water to freshen hands and face, I sat down with these wood-birds to the simplest little table with the fewest settings of newest things, the blue-edged dishes and the cast-iron knife and fork attractive as any china and silver. The little woman began blowing up the embers, and got down the teapot to make tea for the guest, a process which I interfered with as unnecessary. When we three were at the table, — a little table with a very clean table-cloth, — I noticed the bill of fare: — a very few cold saleratus biscuits, something which might have been butter, but which having been kept in a house where there was no cellar and no well, was in a semi-fluid state, and a good generous dishful of string-beans, well cooked and properly seasoned. The biscuits soon gave out, and there were none to replace them, as the young hermits had been waiting several days for a chance to get a sack of

flour from town. But there were plenty of beans, and I made a superb dinner of them. And how prettily and promptly the story of it all came out while we ate beans together: their twelve weeks of married life, his heroic purchase of eighty acres of the heavy timbered land on the side hill at three dollars an acre, for which he could pay forty dollars down, all the rest to be earned on the place.

It was all to be cleared, but he had always been used to work; he was not afraid of that; and the little wife said, "He has nearly an acre cleared already, though he's been working out at haying whenever he's had a chance." They had a span of two-year-old colts; they had ten chickens; no cow yet; they had a cat, a dog, and, to complete the inventory, the little wife said, "Papa gave me two little pigs when we came here, but they have run off into the woods somewhere, and we haven't seen them for a month; I don't believe we will ever see them;" but he, with superior masculine faith, said, "We'll find them in the fall all right, and so fat you won't know them."

"This isn't our house," said the little woman; "Fred's got the logs all cut, and as soon as the

busy time is over we'll have a raising and have our own house. This is an awful lonesome house; an old bachelor built it. He put the door to the east, although the road ran on the other side. But I would have put it fronting the road. I'd rather see folks than the sun, wouldn't you?" She didn't get very lonesome except when Fred was away working; then a day looked like a week. Her folks lived nine miles away; they generally walked over there every Sunday, and her father drove her back part way. Fred wanted to break one of the colts for her to ride, but she thought he was too young yet. There was no well on the hill; they would have to dig deep to get water, much of the way through the rock. The nearest house was half a mile away. She carried her water from there. There was a spring down in the woods only about half as far away, but she preferred to go to the house, because then she could talk with somebody. Then I realized how wasteful I had been of the water with which I had bathed my hands and face; and the pain deepened as I discovered by the droop in one eye and the halt in one limb that somewhere and somehow the machinery of her life had been jolted and a cog

had been broken, some pulley had been thrown off its bearings, and that evermore her pail of water must be carried with a limp. I felt as David did when his devoted followers brought him a drink from the old home spring at the risk of their lives. Suddenly water, the most prodigal of nature's gifts, assumed sacramental value.

The log house had two rooms. In the next room was the bed with its gorgeous patch-quilt, a rag rug on the floor, a Boston rocker, and, unexpected luxury and token of culture, a cabinet organ. Into this room I was invited after dinner. No, she did not play; it was Fred's, a present from his grandmother; she raised him mostly, and because he loved music and had been good to her, she made him a present of this. And although he had never had a lesson in his life, he could play quite well, and sing, too. Fred was a man of few words. She did the talking; but without any of the professional apologies he did what he could at the organ, and played and sang "Jesus, Lover of my Soul." This, he said, was the only piece he could play with both hands, but there were several other pieces he could pick out with one hand, and

she joined him in the singing. There were several things that the expert might criticize in the music, but somehow the songs fitted into that blistering August noon-hour in a wonderful way. The trees took on Sunday hues, the birds seemed to listen, and something rang the prayer bells in the heart. At last the guest was invited to join, and there was a wonderful trio with the stubble-scratched hands trying to strike the chords as each singer went his own way on his own key through "The Sweet By and By," "Hold the Fort," and "Dare to be a Daniel." I thought with comfort of Carlyle's assurance that the nasal dissonance of the Scottish Covenanters, as they labored through the Psalms of David in their Highland chapels, was lost away down the valley — there only harmony and melody carried. I was sure there was praise in the singing, aye, thanksgiving, too, and I did not doubt it reached its fitting home; but I was pleased with the fancy — which amused me so much that I could scarcely preserve the dignity of the occasion — that even the All-hearing Ear would give our songs the benefit of a little distance and a little space for the discords to drop out.



How inevitable were the prayer levels there reached, how natural and easy the few spoken words that phrased the benedictions of life and domesticated the human soul in those wilds. What a sweet season of communion that hour was, with its dinner of herbs! how regretful was the leave-taking on both sides,— I regretting the briefness of my glimpse of this rustic pair of lovers; they, I fancied, settling back with a half-conscious touch of their isolation as they stood in the shadow of the cabin waving their good-byes until Jess and I were promptly lost in forest depths.

I think this story worth telling because it furnishes an indirect commentary upon a noble text. How palatable and nutritious were the “string-beans” garnished by love. How indigestible and unwholesome would the stalled ox have been with pride, pomp, and hatred. I will not venture into the dreamland of the vegetarian who looks for that guileless time when human life will be nourished only upon the bloodless products of field, garden, and forest, when human hands will go unsoiled by the blood of fellow-creatures, but I will stop to note how royal was the hospitality here offered us, how courtly and

gracious was the entertainment we received. "You are welcome to it such as it is," said the boy "house-band." They literally divided their morsel with me.

How their consideration shamed the inconsideration of their too careless guest. How he wasted the water without asking the cost. How he devoured the biscuits without realizing that all they had were on the table. Since that August day I have doubtless been guilty of many unworthy thoughts and acts, but I have done nothing that has made me feel meaner than the wasting of the water which that lame girl had carried half a mile through the hot sun. I wish it might sink deep into memory, this lesson of the unkindness that springs from inconsiderateness. Oh, how unmindful we are of the well-being even of those we love. The malicious deeds we are prepared for; against these the world is in a measure forearmed, because forewarned. But the cruelty of thoughtlessness is that which the great world confronts with helpless hands. No armor can protect us from the pangs caused by stupidity. How little does one half of the world know how the other half lives, and yet how much that one half might know of

the other if it only would. The brutalities born of ignorance are brutalities still, and the corrective is not to be found in more refinement of feeling but in greater exercise of judgment. How lavish we are of the commonplace abundance which in many lives must give way to sore need and pinching economies. Let those who have the unmeasured fulness of Lake Michigan forced upon them day and night by the ceaseless throbbing of a Corliss engine not forget that some must carry their water in tin buckets, up hill, half a mile, and that some of the water-carriers must needs go with halting step. We may let others plead for us the gracious apology, "They did not mean it," but for ourselves we may not make a coward's castle out of our stupidity. We cannot at the same time be both loving and thoughtless.

" 'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep  
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay ;  
'Tis by our follies that so long  
We hold the earth from heaven away.

" These clumsy feet, still in the mire,  
Go crushing blossoms without end ;  
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust  
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

“The ill-timed truth we might have kept —  
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?  
The word we had not sense to say —  
Who knows how grandly it had rung?

“Our faults no tenderness should ask,  
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;  
But for our blunders — oh, in shame  
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.”

In this hill-top home we find a much needed contribution to the labor problem. The little man who faced the eighty acres of wilderness because, as he said, he was not afraid of work, had accepted the high philosophy of Felix Holt, which insisted that it is better for a man to ennoble the station in which he is placed than to attempt to change that station. How are the lives of these two children of the forest, veritable “babes in the woods,” to be saved from hopeless drudgery, from paralyzing inanity? Not by any communistic agitation of Bellamy dreams of divided profits or nationalized labor, but along the lines of love and beauty. William Morris, in his “Hopes and Fears of Art,” pointed out some years ago that the way out of drudgery for the artisan was the development in him of the love for the beautiful and the power of creating

it. Whenever he becomes an artist in his vocation, if it be but the shoeing of horses or the making of wheelbarrows, labor becomes sweet and toil becomes inspiring. I recall the enthusiasm of a Dutch gardener who talked to his cabbages and petted them when they did well, who caressed his melons as they expanded in the sun, and could almost weep for them when marauding boys with barbaric coarseness plugged them before they were ripe. Without this enthusiasm his life would have been most barren; with it he found abundant life, though deprived of English speech. I remember the pauper at one of the county farms which Jess and I once visited, whose days were made happy by his love for the pigs which it was his special business to care for. How he washed and combed them, taxed his ingenuity to prepare for them dainties, had a name for each one, was scarcely happy when out of their sight. These are illustrations of the way out of drudgery, out of the grinding degradations of toil. The grandmother did more for that boy who loved music when she gave him the organ than if she had lifted the mortgage from his farm or cleared his eighty acres of their trees.

What we ought to do for our working-men to-day is to put the love of music into their souls, the joy of love into their hearts, arouse home-making pride in their lives, and then the puncheon floor, a Boston rocker, a patch-work quilt and a diet of string-beans will make them independent as nabobs and happier than millionnaires. I quarrel often with the present distribution of wealth. There are many who do not play the game of life fairly, who get more than their share and act meanly about it. I long for the power to help my companions, the toilers of the world, the wage-workers in society, but I would like to go to them with a song and not with a groan, I would like to divert them from their woes rather than dilate upon them. Let the labor organizations send a minstrel through their shops rather than a walking delegate. Let him go with his pipes and play the tune of "Over the Hills and Far Away," and he will shorten their hours of labor and increase the bread-purchasing power of their wages. The hope of the artisan is art, the salt of toil is beauty. "Give me a new thought that I may refresh myself with it," said the suffering Herder. "Read me something, something that has meat

in it, something from Paul," said the dying Lute Taylor.

But deeper than the labor problem are the problems of life, and this dinner of herbs reaches deep into these. If the vest is thin and the heart be warm the case is not so bad, but let the vest be ever so soft and sumptuous, if the heart be weak, the life will be subject to chills. We must put more thought into the life of the working-man. The monopoly of dollars must be met by a combination of brains. When we have learned to fight the syndicates of greed with the trusts of love, then the working-man's triumphs will be permanent and lasting.

"Why didn't you go out to Dakota or Kansas, and have for nothing twice as many acres of open prairie and avoid all the work of the clearing with a much better farm in the bargain?" I asked of my host. He replied, "We talked that over before we were married. All her folks are around here. I have no folks, but I have a good many friends in these parts. We've always lived here, and we concluded we preferred to take a poorer farm and have society, work harder and have more privileges." It is easy to imagine with what a smile of pity the Dakota farmer or the favored citizen

of Kansas would receive such a judgment as that. This boy and girl assuming the responsibilities of husband and wife may have erred in their judgment, but the principle upon which they based it was profoundly wise. Let him who would not waste life seek privileges and not acres, or acres only in so far as they bring privileges. Society, in the non-conventional sense in which this unsophisticated child of the woods used the word, is preferable to wealth, position, or power. There are but few adequate compensations for the loss of human relations and the breaking up of the blessed and slowly forming tissues that knit communities into one fabric. The nomad's life belongs to far earlier eras in human history than that of the civilization to which we aspire. The modern tendency to live on wheels, to pull up the tent-stakes and move on at the slightest provocation of outward attractions, has a tendency to disintegrate that slowly forming stratification of the most human thing in humanity, the home. Even in our cities, an itching to be in constant communication with a real estate agent is an evidence of man's tendency to relapse into the gypsy life of the past. The Bedouins of the desert find their spiritual kindred with the



Bedouins of the boulevards. They are illustrations of the law of degeneracy and not of progress.

This little woman in the woods would have cut her door on the side toward the road, even though she missed the morning sun. And she was right; for the spectrum of the human face reveals vitalizing forces richer and more subtle to the human soul than any found in the solar spectrum. I would rather live in an alley, stayed all round with human loves, associations, and ambitions, than dwell in a palace with drawbridge, moat, and portcullis, apart from the community about me, alienated from my neighbors, unable to share the woes and the joys of those with whom I divide nature's bounty of land and landscape, of air and sky. It is a serious thing to break up the associations of youth and the privileges of companionship. These things are justifiable only when better, larger, truer home relations are secured. Life is measured by its yield of contentment, of inspiration, of usefulness, not by its tax-rolls or bank account. The soul is as thin as a sheet of paper if it is conscious of nothing but personal ambitions and personal interests. The great soul is known by

its public spirit and its impersonal anxieties. William Lloyd Garrison grieved for the crimes of the nation, and Abraham Lincoln carried the woes of the people upon his heart. I have had my say against partisanship, but better that than the individualism which knows no pride in place or people. Better the blind enthusiasm of politics than the selfish poise of him who is indifferent to home or native land, and thrives best an alien on foreign shores. He has but poorly solved the problems of life who has not planted himself in some place around which tender memories and helpful associations grow, and near some friends without whom life is more meagre and its inspirations less exalted.

“For him no minstrel raptures swell ;  
High though his title, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;  
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch, concentrated all in self,  
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
And doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.”

If I may separate the inseparable and divide in thought what cannot be divided in fact, I

would say that the two souls nesting up there in the woods help in some simple but real way to the solution of the problem of religion as well as the problem of life. The little wife said they had preaching every Sunday in her father's and mother's neighborhood, in the same schoolhouse that she used to go to school in. One Sunday 'twas the Primitive Methodists, the other Sunday it was the Adventists. She thought the Adventist was pretty smart, although her parents belonged to the other church. The little man disposed of both with the curt remark that neither of them had anything to say much, but he went to meeting because he liked to hear folks sing and thought it was the right thing to do, anyway. The doting wife volunteered the information that they were very anxious to have Fred take charge of the singing, but he was too modest, though he could do it better than anybody there. He thought it wrong for one to pretend to do something he wasn't fit for, and he had never had any chance to study music—never had had but one term of singing school.

Their guest carried no signs of his profession. What preacher there was in him must have been

deep below the surface. And so to this secular horseman they freely confided their religious attitude. Neither of them belonged to the church. Both of them felt that they would like to, but she was deterred because the people quarrelled more in the church than out of it, as she thought; and he had tried and tried to get interested but never could see any sense in much that they said and believed. His piety touched me, but it was not of a theological kind. Not his belief or non-belief, but the unconscious way he settled into his place in the universe, the absence of the friction which too much selfishness brings, hinted to me of the coming religion. Life seems to rise out of the sea of unconsciousness and pass through the turbulent development of consciousness, to rise again into that upper stratum of spontaneity which speaks of a volition adjusted to the infinite plan, the human will becoming unconsciously an exponent of the Divine, loving the nearest things, doing the nearest duties, accepting the tasks offered as they come one by one.

I know not how far the songs of those married children will reach, I know not how much wisdom they may attain. The output of their little lives will necessarily be rimmed around by their rock-

ribbed hills, it will be sheltered, shadowed, concealed by the oaks that seem to belittle them. Some day, — who knows how soon, — the wheel will jump another cog, the other eye will droop, there will be a halt on the other side. Then the water-carrying will cease, and perchance the stumpy little man before his “eighty” is half cleared will go plodding through his woods alone, and the cracked voice will be more cracked; but I believe their lives, however short and meagre, were an investment in heavenly things, because they accepted as a divine task what has been falsely called the primal curse, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” Thorns and thistles cumbered their ground; on the herb of the field did they feed, even a few lentils. But they saw no flaming sword, felt no curse. They accepted as their vocation the subduing of the earth, which has proved to them as to mankind, the primal privilege, the blessing of life. Dean Swift has said in oft-quoted words, “Whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together.”

And long before the Christian Dean wrote this, Zoroaster, the ancient prophet of Persia, had said, "The third place where the earth feels most happy is where one of the faithful waters ground that is dry, or dries ground that is too wet, and cultivates corn, grass and fruit," "Unhappy is the land that has long lain unsown with the seed of the sower," and "He who sows corn sows holiness. When the wheat is coming forth the dêvas are destroyed."

This kind of piety did I find in the log hut that yielded its dinner of herbs,—the simple piety of stainless toil, the practical piety that seeks to bring into the service of mind the forces of nature, the piety that made the little man face the Titanic task of felling a forest without flinching, the piety that led him to believe in the power of his own little hands to convert the tangled and ragged forest growth into grain fields and orchards. "Apples grow real well in the timber land here when it is cleared, and we are going to plant some trees just as soon as the ground is fit for them," said the little wife.

Let not my story be weakened by any idealization. Let us hold hard to the stronger reality. He who imagines that poetry is allied to fiction

need look for no poetry here. And still I believe there is poetry here, but it is the poetry that lies in the solid prose of life, the plain facts in which these lives rested. I say these children of the woods helped solve the pressing problems in religion to-day by simply attending to their business, by doing the next thing in a cheerful, kindly fashion, by facing their tasks in unconscious courage. They made themselves rich in their poverty. They sang their lonesomeness away, and they never knew that this was religion; indeed, so akin they were to the saint and the sage that they did not know they were poor or lonesome. Their life was hid with Christ in God, and they did not know it. Perhaps most of such living must partake largely of this unconsciousness. They solved the problem of religion by being that which they could not explain and by doing that which perhaps they never tried to justify. Thus they won for themselves the respect of their scattered neighbors, and in due time the right to honorable graves.

You and I will not believe that these children of the woods lived their lives in vain. They help us to measure all life by its loyalty and not by its achievements. The story is a

backwoods commentary on the great text of Browning:—

“Not on the vulgar mass  
Called ‘work’ must sentence pass,  
Things done, that took the eye and had the price ;  
\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
All instincts immature,  
All purposes unsure,  
That weighed not as his work,  
Yet swelled the man’s amount.”

A dinner of herbs to a tramping horseman was a passing hospitality, the value of which ought to be measured not only by what it was given him to leave behind but by that which he carried away with him. May that incident in the tramp project rays of kindness and thoughtfulness across the distances of time and space without intervention, touching lives into helpfulness so that that dinner of herbs becomes an abiding impulse, quickening hearts, an imperishable food for thought that will renew flagging spirits, refresh starving souls. May the cracked notes of the impromptu choir that sang to the accompaniment of the wheezy little organ awaken a refrain of peace that will soothe the distracted and tempestuous life of the city.



Surely the stalled ox in steaming gravies served in hatred and with selfishness has failed to yield the benediction of the spirit which this dinner of herbs, sauced in kindness and served in love, brings to us. May this gleam of light from the backwoods of Wisconsin dispel a darkness that often settles upon the avenues, and may the heart of the little woodsman and his child wife become dynamos of the spirit from which shall stream a dart of heaven's electric light.

“How far that little candle throws its beams,  
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.”



A QUEST FOR THE UNAT-  
TAINABLE

## CARCASSONNE

“I’m growing old ; I’ve sixty years ;  
I’ve labored all my life in vain ;  
In all that time of hopes and fears  
I’ve failed my dearest wish to gain.  
I see full well that here below  
Bliss unalloyed there is for none.  
My prayer will ne’er fulfilment know —  
I never have seen Carcassonne,  
I never have seen Carcassonne !

“You see the city from the hill —  
It lies behind the mountain blue ;  
And yet, to reach it, one must still  
Five long and weary leagues pursue,  
And, to return, as many more !  
Ah, had the vintage plenteous grown !  
The grape withheld its yellow store —  
I shall not look on Carcassonne,  
I shall not look on Carcassonne !

“They tell me every day is there  
Not more nor less than Sunday gay ;  
In shining robes and garments fair,  
The people walk upon their way.  
One gazes there on castle walls,  
As grand as those of Babylon,

A bishop and two generals !  
I do not know fair Carcassonne,  
I do not know fair Carcassonne.

“The vicar’s right. He says that we  
Are ever wayward, weak, and blind.  
He tells us in his homily  
Ambition ruins all mankind.  
Yet could I there two days have spent  
While still the autumn sweetly shone,  
Ah me, I might have died content  
When I had looked on Carcassonne,  
When I had looked on Carcassonne.”

\* \* \* \* \*

So crooned one day, close by Limoux,  
A peasant double bent with age.  
“Rise up, my friend,” said I ; “with you  
I’ll go upon this pilgrimage.”  
We left next morning his abode,  
But, heaven forgive him ! half-way on  
The old man died upon the road,  
He never gazed on Carcassonne.  
Each mortal has his Carcassonne.

GUSTAVE NADAUD.

## A QUEST FOR THE UNAT- TAINABLE

But one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. — PHILIPPIANS iii. 13, 14.

WHEN I was a boy, the Wisconsin River flowed by my home. It was then a great thoroughfare, which carried every year hundreds of millions of feet of logs, lumber, shingles, and lath, from what was then the great pine region of Wisconsin to the many points of distribution along the Mississippi River, all the way from Prairie du Chien to New Orleans. The river, in the spring and fall when the water was high, was picturesque with great floating fields of pine, moving with the current. These rafts, travelling in fleets of from half a dozen to twenty under the lead of one pilot, peopled the water and the immediate banks with a swarm of raftsmen who again were picturesque features of the landscape, bold, athletic, generally intemperate, but oftentimes chiv-

alric to women and generous to children. Life among them was held cheap, and still they had a code of honor among themselves which was exacting, and even ideal. A raftsman might be profane, was probably intemperate, but he must not be mean. He must not cheat at cards, lie himself out of a mistake, or leave a fellow-raftsman swung on a sandbar without lending a hand, although giving assistance might necessitate a half-hour's hard pulling at the oar, a long walk back to the brother in distress, and four or five hours in the water wet to the waist. In those days the banks of the Wisconsin River were lined with a series of busy little villages, thrifty centres of trade, and always boisterous places of resort. Raftsmen generally had money, or its equivalent, and they appreciated a place where they could get a good meal, which always implied a large amount of liquid refreshment. The life of these river towns was based upon the saloon, the store, the lumber-yard, and the tavern, all of which found a fitful patronage in the raftsmen, tramping in squads on their way back after abandoning the floating homes that carried them down.

The railroads have changed all this. A raft of lumber on the Wisconsin River is now a rare

sight, and the towns whose names were so familiar to the residents of that riverside forty years ago are now lost villages. Most of them have long since been forgotten, and the names that survive have often been transferred to an adjoining location where the nearest railway station has sprung up.

Port Andrew, situated some thirty miles from my boyhood home, was one of these river towns. Forty years ago it was one of the most prosperous villages in Crawford county. It had the most convenient "eddy" on the river for tying up rafts. It was a good lumber point. It had an abundant supply of saloons and a reputation for being a tough place, where high stakes were played for, and riotous carousals were frequent. I had always thought of Port Andrew with ominous distrust. It was a place I should have been afraid to enter as a boy. It was associated in my imagination with the revolver, the bowie-knife, the saloon, and the gambling den.

During the summer of 1889, Jess and I went to see Port Andrew, and planned to spend the night in its shelter. We found it less than a deserted village, for the very site upon which it was built has been mostly washed away by



the encroaching river; and the place where the big store, the great hotel, and the leading lumber-yard once stood was now pointed out as the main channel of the stream. But there still remained one store where the post-office was kept, and where, after much persuasion, the traveller and his horse were given entertainment over night. It was a restful summer evening; and the landscape was delightful with its wooded hills forming a background to the sluggish river, the sleeping islands, and the sleepier little hamlet, which was eight or ten miles away from the nearest railroad station. There was no sound of violence or mark of rudeness. The only sign of human passion to break the calm of the fading day came from the boy who could not induce his cows to come across from the island in mid-stream. They preferred to stand in mid-channel with the water nearly up to their backs, affording a refreshing retreat from the flies and mosquitoes.

“*That* island,” said the woman who acted in the multiple capacity of shopkeeper, post-mistress, and landlady, “That island across there is called ‘Guthrie’s island’ because Mr. Guthrie has always been in the habit of keeping his

calves over there in the springtime, while that other island farther down is called 'Long Jim' because, in the rafting days before I was born, there was a raftsman known up and down the river everywhere as 'Long Jim,' he was so tall. He was a kind of a good fellow, I think. Everybody liked him, and one time he tuk sick and died on his raft, and they tuk and rolled him up in his blanket and buried him on that island, and that island has been called 'Long Jim' ever sence." Peace to the ashes of Long Jim! How many men have striven for fame, over whose body, cased in metallic casket, the granite shaft has been reared, whose names will pass out of sight and out of memory, while the fame and the name of Long Jim are still kept green upon the earth because his roughened comrades found him a "good fellow," and "everybody liked him." To him an island has been given as his sepulchre, and it will bear his name, the name of "Long Jim," while its willowy banks resist the shifting currents of the Wisconsin River.

But not all of Port Andrew is scenery and ancient history. There were at that time two characters living there, as I discovered, whose acquaintance I thought I should be glad to cul-

tivate. One was Thompson, a famous dog-trainer, whom I did not see, to my regret. But the other man was at home. To meet with him was of itself an incident worthy a week's ride. Here I found the only original and genuine "perpetual-motion" man I have ever encountered. The first thing that attracted the attention of the horseman as he approached what was left of this deserted village was a weird, roofless, tower-like structure, perhaps twenty feet square and thirty feet high, exposing at the top a curious combination of levers, cranks, and wheels, showing the weather-marks of successive years of building. There was something uncanny about the whole structure, a preternatural atmosphere which Jess did not like. She had many misgivings in her heart about the propriety of passing it, and she finally consented to do so entirely on the strength of my judgment. I had to assume all the responsibility.

At supper-time the landlady was quite willing to talk about this, the one "attraction" of Port Andrew. "Have you never heerd tell of old Haney, James Haney? Some folks reckon him very smart, but we all think he's mostly crazy. He's spent the worth of two or three farms in

making that contraption there; and if he don't die pretty soon, I reckon he'll have to go to the poorhouse, for every cent of money he can raise he still puts onto it. He onct had a lot o' land here, was the wealthiest man in Port Andrew, if not in Crawford county, but now it's all gone but one forty, and he wants to sell that, and just as soon as he does, he'll put it all into his machine. He always spends all his money on it, and then he stops. He never goes in debt; but just as soon as he gets more money, he sends for the carpenters and other kinds of workmen, and at it they go again. Every evening after supper them times, he says, 'Wife, pay the men,' an' when that's done, he says, 'Got any left?' 'n' if she says, 'Yes,' then he says, 'Gentlemen, come again to-morrow. When the money stops, we'll stop; until then, we'll go on.' He always makes my man mad. He don't like him; but I think there's something good about old Haney. I like to hear him talk; he must be smart; and then it's good to see a man so earnest like and never discouraged. It's nigh onto twenty years now sence I've known him, and he is always hopeful."

That night I dreamed of perpetual motion,

and in my sleep I thought of a contrivance that would enable one to take Emerson's advice, "Hitch your wagon to a star." I dreamed of my star hewing the wood and carrying the water. Next morning I paid my respects to this rural genius, this pursuer of the impossible. I was early, but he was earlier. He was already at work at his bench in a large room which still had the shelving and some remnants of the merchandise that belonged to a country store. Here he once carried the largest stock of goods in Crawford county. Now on every hand were designs and models of various inventions, some thirty of which were, he assured me, "ready for patenting," any one of which, he said, was worth a living, but he was too busy to attend to *them*. All of them were merely accessories to the main idea, the chief object of his life, which was to demonstrate the possibility of continuously using as a mechanical power the most universal and available force of nature, gravitation. Said he, "Gravitation is the boy that will work for you day and night; he's always in harness, if you'll only give him a chance. People say that I am trying to get up a perpetual-motion machine. It isn't so. I am simply trying to utilize God's force, and he makes

it perpetual." In the fond hope that I was the man of capital whom he had always been expecting to come along and help him to give his invention to the world, or at least thinking that I might be the man who had "studied nature and could understand science," — he talked to none other now, he said, — he poured the story of his dreams, his disappointments, his philosophy, and his inventions upon me for two delightful hours. There stood the straight, sinewy form, eighty-three years old, scarcely showing any yielding to the weight of years, with the kindly gray of his eye full of light, his voice burdened with a deep purpose. He had always had ideas which he wanted to work out, but he stopped to make money, and never had time for them until, when he was sixty years of age, through the failure of the projectors of a western railroad for which he had contracted a great number of ties, he lost the bulk of what constituted in that section an ample fortune. "Then," said he, "I could throw up my hat. I felt free to go to work, and I said, 'If the Lord will forgive me for wasting so much time, I will begin now and try to make up.' "

He was putting the completing touches on a rat-trap, the "best one ever made." Rats he

considered the rising enemy to modern civilization. He had studied rats for years; the wrecks, skeletons, and ghosts of three hundred different experimental rat-traps lay around the shop, and they had all gone to perfect this trap which was now completed. He had spent twenty-five hundred dollars on it, and had never sold one. It could be made, he said, so as to sell for two dollars and a half, and it would "catch a barrelful of rats in a night if there were that many around." I will not attempt to explain the rat-trap, but I assure you I found the philosophy of the trap and the psychology of rats profoundly interesting, whatever the practical value of the contrivance might be. The yard was full of gates, self-openers, self-closers, self-latchers, single gates, double gates, garden gates, and gates with canopies over them "for the benefit of lovers who will come home late and hang over the gate anyway," he said. Even the neighbors said he had a "mighty good gate, sure enough," but the young man with capital and energy had never come along to put the gate on the market, and he had no time for it himself. He then reverted to the marvellous mechanism in the adjoining tower, explained his principles with admirable clearness, showing in-

timate familiarity with many of the results of modern science and with scientific terminology. "People say I am crazy," he said, "but they are not able to show me the fallacy of my position."

"Did the thing ever move at all?" I asked my landlady before visiting him. "Indeed it did," she replied. "Two or three years ago he asked a lot of us in to see the thing start. He let me touch it off with my own hand, and the thing went like it was mad and frightened us all, even the old man himself, I think. I got out of the house quick, I tell you, and it went for half an hour or so until it ran itself all to pieces and bruk the thing up so that the poor old man has never had money enough to get it all fixed again, although he is working at it, and seems cheerful and happy like in the thought that it is going to go some day. I am sorry for him." I heard a different comment from a man with a fish-pole, who stopped me on my way from the interview to ask what I thought of the old man's machine. His opinion was, "The Lord has sent this as a punishment on that old man, I do believe, and he's going to send him plumb into the poor-house just because he's been so mighty mean in wastin' money on such a thing instead o' doing



good with it." But the landlady said the old man with a fishing-rod hadn't anything to say, for he was the laziest fellow in the Kickapoo valley.

But I leave this young man of eighty-three in the midst of his rat-traps and automatic gates, musing upon his great discoveries and dreaming dreams more real than the realities that imprisoned his neighbors.

"Crazy?" and you join with the neighbors in saying "Of course." Yes, doubtless, but there is much method in this madness. I wish some of us who boast of our sanity might share his insanity, might have enough of it at least to enable us to work as diligently at our tasks as he did at his; to keep our minds as nimble, to study as intently and devoutly up to the eighty-third year of our lives, as he did. "The men around here don't have much to do with the old man. They think he is a kind of a fool, but I tell you he is no fool, and I pity him," said my landlady. Few characters whom it has been my fortune to find in my vacation wanderings have stayed with me with more helpfulness and encouragement than this floundering fool, as he seemed to his neighbors; this prophetic enthusiast as I prefer to call him. Poor old Haney, the perpet-

ual-motion man! I have long since ceased to pity him, because there are so many more favored and more sensible than he that have stirred my pity more.

“No tears are sadder than the smile  
With which I quit Elias. Bitterly  
I feel that every change upon this earth  
Is bought with sacrifice. My yearnings fail  
To reach that high apocalyptic mount  
Which shows in bird’s-eye view a perfect world,  
Or enter warmly into other joys  
Than those of faulty, struggling human kind.”

So sang George Eliot of another “crank” as the American slang goes, a “Minor Prophet,” as she called him. But

“I too rest in faith  
That man’s perfection is the crowning flower,  
Toward which the urgent sap in life’s great tree  
Is pressing, — seen in puny blossoms now,  
But in the world’s great morrows to expand  
With broadest petal and with deepest glow.”

The old alchemists, seeking the elixir of life, found what was better, the elements of chemistry. The Spaniard, as the story goes, chasing a mountain goat which he probably did not catch, found at the roots of the shrub that gave way under his

grasp as he climbed, the gold of Peru, which was his nearest approach to the Eldorado he sought. Bessemer, in trying to make wrought iron, discovered the great steel-making process. Columbus sailed in search of India; God showed him America. The Pilgrim fathers came to establish a colony; God made of them a republic. Thus ever does his deliberation over-reach our impetuosity. Humanity's anticipation is always smaller than the divine realization. The toy, the coveted picture book, the education, the position, the living, the farm, the home, the possessions men have dared to hope for, one after another are given. Companionship, sympathy, love, come in the wake of the beatific vision, not in anticipation of it. Dream after dream lures man onward, and all the time he is not dealing with illusions, he is not chasing will-o'-the-wisps, but following the beckoning hand of destiny.

“ Then is the lyric dream

Not given to them in vain ! Old death-wounds still  
Set free the spirit for eternal life ;  
In every dirge there sleeps a battle-march ;  
And those slain heroes of the past may tell  
How they attained, who only seemed to fail ;  
And they that fell of old, on those gray fields,  
By their red Death, enable us to live ! ”

God puts us to work on these small jobs that our larger mission may be fulfilled. Let no one dare distrust the forward beckonings. Ignorance places the golden age behind. We cannot, if we would, return to it. Knowledge places the golden age ahead of us. We must strive for it. The simplicity of Eden, whatever it was, is out of the question now. It is past. The triumph of spirit, the reign of reason, the kingdom of love is ahead. We must look forward to it.

Our old friend at Port Andrew, missing his perpetual motion, may have perfected a rat-trap that will yet be a blessing. If he did not succeed in substituting gravitation for horse-power, he may have developed the gate that will stay closed and keep the cattle out of the corn. If we are to have larger things, there must be place for those who dream of larger things. The sailor who dares steer toward a star may make a port.

“All great works in this world spring from the ruins  
Of greater projects, — ever, on our earth,  
Men block out Babels, to build Babylons.”

But not on the material plane is the story of my perpetual-motion man most suggestive. John

Brown wrote, a few days before his execution: "I have enjoyed remarkable composure and cheerfulness of mind ever since my confinement, and it is a great comfort to feel assured that I am permitted to die for a cause, not merely to pay the debt of nature as all must." It is splendid to have a cause to live for as well as to die for. The most pitiable life is the aimless life. Heaven help the man or woman, the boy or girl, who is not interested in anything outside of his or her own immediate comfort and that related thereto, who eats bread to make strength for no special cause, who pursues science, reads poetry, studies books, for no earthly or heavenly purpose other than mere enjoyment of acquisition; who goes on accumulating wealth, piling up money, with no definite or absorbing purpose to apply it to anything in particular. These are the men that are in the way. Who would not prefer to be the old Haney, who, in his eighty-third year, walked with nimble and martial steps toward the poor-house, with head and heart full of a dream of perpetual motion or something better, rather than his complacent and "sensible" critic, who had the reputation of being the laziest lout in the valley?

Who would not be a Mungo Park drowning in the river he had discovered, or a Sir John Franklin freezing among the icebergs he had attempted to conquer, rather than your multi-millionnaire fattening upon his unconsecrated millions with no divine purpose in his soul, who, dying, will leave a world that will hasten to forget him?

I would not say with the Archbishop of Toledo, when Cervantes was old, poor, and neglected, "Heaven forbid that his necessity should ever be relieved, since it is his poverty that makes the world rich"; but I will say that I would rather be the author of "Don Quixote," though poor and miserable, than be the Archbishop of Toledo, fat, healthy, and complacent. The world has need of inspired men, —those who believe in the unattainable and those who are practical enough to venture the impossible. The only things history seems to care much about are the impossible things; and they are most loved who have dared the most in the interest of the impossible, they who have defied a doubting world, proving thereby the possibilities hid in the world's impossibilities.

"That low man sees a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it :

This high man, with a great thing to pursue,  
Dies ere he knows it.

That low man goes on adding one to one ;  
His hundred's soon hit :

This high man, aiming at a million,  
Misses a unit.

That, has the world here — should he need the next,  
Let the world mind him.

This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed,  
Seeking shall find him.''

But I dare not stop without recognizing still more frankly the unutterable and apparently unmitigated pathos which hangs around the life of the humble Port Andrew inventor,—a pathos which, indeed, hangs around every life that is devoted to an ideal. There is an unanswered prayer, an unrealized dream in every life. There is a deep-rooted, far-reaching disappointment in store for the noblest children of earth.

I can see but two rifts in the cloud through which light streams at such a time. I remember that the soul prefers the pain of disappointed aspiration to the joys of satisfied ambition. It is better to fall crushed under the wheels of the car of progress which we are trying to move forward than to fix that same car by our complacent weight to the place upon which it stands ;

for inasmuch as other men have labored and we have entered into their reward, so our toil, be it ever so humble, will either move the car or help grade the road over which it has to pass, smoothing the rough places perhaps with our bones.

The other rift in the cloud is the hope which, in proportion as we understand the pathos of the disappointment, rises into the demand of justice, an argument that the lines must converge farther on, that the dream will come full circle when it is orbéd in eternity, that no vagrant wish of a loyal soul can be left unfulfilled, no clumsy effort of a consecrated will go unrewarded. As there is a breast prepared for the expectant babe, a light for the eye formed in darkness, a sound for the ear built in silence, so there is a reality to meet the prophetic gropings of the human soul. The expectations of the earnest, the desire of the good, the dream of the enthusiast, whether in the Bible or out of it, are promissory notes of the Almighty, and his notes are good. Only the fish in the rivers that flow through sunless caverns are eyeless, and only dead souls are visionless. Dying nations look backward. Growing nations look for-



ward. I believe in immortality because God has given me a prophetic appetite for it. This law is always the compensation and comfort of the poet. It is the truth groped after by Nathaniel Ward of the seventeenth century in the quaint lines:—

“ There Peace will go to War,  
And Silence make a noise ;  
Where upper things will not  
With nether equipoise.

“ The upper World shall rule,  
While Stars will run their race ;  
The nether World obey,  
While people keep their place.”

This is the faith magnificently stated by the great Victorian laureate of the nineteenth century:—

“ That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete.”

Perhaps they who feel their limitations most keenly live most in the land of the delectable. They are the truest residents in the unattainable country who are most homesick for it. Carcassonne was only five leagues away from the

home of the vine-dresser in the poem, who died before visiting the beautiful city. The long years had given him no opportunity, the hunger of his life was unsatisfied, he never saw the vision; but the Carcassonne in his heart may have been a more beautiful city than that on the mountain-side.

“The old man died upon the road,  
He never gazed on Carcassonne.  
Each mortal has his Carcassonne.”

Yes, let us thank God for this. The Carcassonne in every heart is the best thing in it, for it has come of growth and it is the sure pledge of growths yet to come. The unattained city that rests on the side of the Delectable Mountain which we have never visited measures the value of life in this world, and is the earnest of life to come.

## THE RIVER OF LIFE

## THE RIVER OF LIFE

Thou in thy narrow banks art pent :  
The stream I love unbounded goes  
Through flood and sea and firmament ;  
Through light, through life, it forward flows.

I see the inundation sweet,  
I hear the spending of the stream  
Through years, through men, through nature fleet,  
Through love and thought, through power and dream.

\* \* \* \* \*

So forth and brighter fares my stream,—  
Who drink it shall not thirst again ;  
No darkness stains its equal gleam,  
And ages drop in it like rain.”

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

## THE RIVER OF LIFE

A river with its streams shall make glad the city of God.

PSALM xlv. 4.

RIVERS have been the highways of civilization. Along the banks of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Indus did the earlier nations rise. Memphis, Thebes, Babylon, Rome, Paris, and London were mighty marts first fertilized by rivers. Eleven States of our Union bear the names of rivers. The sanctities of life have gathered along the banks of running streams. The Jordan flows through the Bible, making green its pastures and filling its valleys with flowers. Although the Jew hung his harp on the willow trees by the rivers of Babylon, the natives erected their shrines along its banks. The devout Hindu soothes his soul and magnifies his life if he may but bathe his body in the Ganges. Poetry, like religion, — indeed poetry is the blossom and fruit of religion, — has delighted in the river. Shakespeare had his Avon, Wordsworth his Yarrow, Longfellow his Charles, and Emerson

his Musketaquid. Wordsworth well says of rivers,

“And never did genius slight them as they go.”

The river has lost none of its potency, its sanctity is not a thing of the Orient or for ancient peoples alone. The indignant king of Syria was right when he resented the superior claim which Elisha made for the waters of Jordan, and said, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?” What Naaman said of his Syrian streams I am inclined to say of the waters of the Wisconsin, from whose banks I come with my life renewed by its hillslopes and valleys. Trees, grasses, and birds have ministered unto me, but better than all these has been my communing with the river. Morning, noon, and night, for six weeks, from the porch of Westhope cottage on Tower Hill, have I watched the gliding stream in its broad two-mile sweep, edging the hills, girdling the islands, threading the bridge. I have never wearied in watching its silent flux out of mystery into mystery. When the parching sun blistered the land, burnt the fields and dusted the roads,

the river, undismayed, slaked the ever-rising thirst of its sands. When the storms came, the rains fell, and the trees swayed, moaned, and gave thanks, the river made no halt, it simply moved on. High up on the hillslope I was perched, and it seemed to me at times that there was no poetry so fine, no picture so serene, no romance so bewitching as that Wisconsin river, in whose waters I bathed as a child, in whose skirting woods I hunted the cows as a barefooted boy, along whose banks I dreamed and toiled as a youth, and with whose every feature I thought I had lived familiarly as a man, though in those weeks of rest I found what I never knew before. I reluctantly left it behind with its lessons but partly conned, its wisdom unexhausted, glad to work for ten months more if at the end of that time I may be rewarded by another season of courtship with my river. The waters of the Wisconsin are to me more than ever a part of that water of life which slakes the thirst of the soul as it cools the fevered pulse of the body. It, like its ancient companions, is a river of God, flowing for the "healing of the nations."

The Wisconsin bears no traffic now. Its

shores have been deserted by the tradesman. Its once busy villages and rural commercial centres have been lured away by the whistle of the steam-engine ; the railroad has released man from the troubles and anxieties of navigating its inadequate waters. He who is still made restless by the passion of a savage ancestry and seeks to amuse himself by taking life, vexes its waters to little purpose ; his pole and line fret the sliding waters chiefly that he may catch new lessons of patience, and that he may, if indeed his life is wanting in such tutorship, be disciplined by disappointment. Those who know most of the habits of our river insist that it is the happy home of "plenty of fish," but the fish have been made wise by civilization, or what amounts to about the same thing, man in his haste and care for better things, has lost the secret and forgotten the art of catching them ; and I do not regret this. Yet of this unused, unyielding, and unsung river of the West, I must borrow the poet's lines to speak my love and gratitude.

"Thy ever-youthful waters keep  
A course of lively pleasure ;  
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,  
Accordant to the measure.



The vapours linger round the Heights,  
They melt, and soon must vanish ;  
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine —  
Sad thought, which I would banish,  
But that I know, where'er I go,  
Thy genuine image, Yarrow !  
Will dwell with me, to heighten joy,  
And cheer my mind in sorrow."

This river "with its streams makes glad the city of God" whenever it is known in its relations, for until then it is not known at all. That stretch of water bending its arm around the stolid bluff may seem the most commonplace of prosaic things, the same old river that it was over forty years ago when first I knew it, wrestling unsuccessfully with the shifting sands. However fields and homes and peoples change, it appears still the same. When we relate in thought the river to that exhaustless source of its being that comes from cloud-land, the benignant feedings of silent dews, the mystic springs born in snow-land and stored in rocky cisterns, the thousand rivulets that quietly replenish it as they creep through valley and ravine, under shady trees and through marshy glades, then the visible stream suggests to the mind invisible cycles that reach out laterally

through valleys and up hills to mountain heights, and kiss the cloud, the bountiful mother of rivers. When we realize that every drop in the river-bed is a pilgrim hasting with unwearied feet to that holy shrine it knows not of, that home in the mystic deep, and that when it finds its pilgrimage ended in the ocean's breast it will be again called up higher, wooed by the sun and sent back again to travel its beautiful round, then it becomes the most changeable of changing things. That sweep of river which has lulled and soothed me is but the visible link in the endless chain of being; it was the seen moment in the unseen round of existence, a segment in the divine circle of law, a beat of the rhythmic clock of nature. This river is the mother of the fern, the father of the meadow, the partner of the farmer, the friend of the birds. It has underground connection with the pine tree, clinging desperately to the naked face of the precipitous rock which enters into the rugged architecture of Tower Hill. We wonder how it lives up there where everything is dry, barren, and blistered, but the river knows and the tree knows. The river says, "It is easy for me to reach up to it when the root reaches down to me," and the pine says, "It is easy to live only

so I can strike one root into the water level of the river."

Looked upon in this light, the river is a flux in permanence. It is the familiarity of ceaseless change, the stability of endless motion. The river that at night gives back the glory of the sunset, nay, contributes one-half of the glory itself, is not the river that welcomes the sunrise. That river is forty miles away, and the new river has come since last night from the hills of Baraboo, forty miles up-stream. The mould is the same, but the material is different; the form remains, the substance has changed. And still there is the sense of permanence that overlays the evanescent, and the stream in going does not rob us. We should lose the river if by any means it were compelled to tarry with us and to give over its journeying.

Again, as we look on the river, it becomes the great worker of nature, the tireless toiler; it is God's excavator, the world's ploughman. What a burden-bearer it is! How it polishes the pebbles, carves the hills, moulds the bluffs, and builds its islands. Geikie, the geologist, estimates that the Mississippi River carries annually into the Gulf of Mexico solid matter enough to build a

prism two hundred and sixty-eight feet in height with a base of one square mile. The port of Adria, the thriving commercial town of ancient times, which gave its name to the Adriatic Sea, is now fourteen miles inland. The Amazon colors the water of the ocean three hundred miles out from shore. So busy and so effective a toiler is the river that what once the geologists thought was produced by some mighty spasm of nature, some special hammer-strokes of God, they are now quite sure is but the work of the patient rivers of the world, the silent streams that, unasked and unthanked, work away day by day, smoothing out this rough old world of ours, fertilizing arid sand-plains and draining the bog-holes of earth. One little stream in the Grand Cañon of Colorado has chiselled out a gorge three hundred miles long, and, in some places, six thousand feet deep. The rivers have so grooved the face of Colorado in some sections that the geologist tells us it can hardly be crossed except by birds.

Perhaps this thought of the river as a toiler was the most consoling and soothing one to my overstrained nerves as I lazily brooded over its beauty from my hammock. It was a comfort to think that there was something at work while

I was idle, and that the great workers do not grow weary. Though we let go once in a while, the machinery of life does not stop. It is good to touch elbows whenever we can with a "power not ourselves," good to remember that when we fall out the column does not halt, that our "I will" and "I will not" sound small and oftentimes impudent when uttered in the presence of the resistless forces that bear us on their bosoms and use our indolence as well as our diligence "to make glad the city of God."

And so as this little stream runs through our thought, more and more does it suggest the solemn river of human life with its flux in the permanent that has been bearing down through the ages, carrying in its bosom the emotions and the thoughts, the loves and experiences of the nations through which it has passed. This river of humanity has also been fed from unseen sources. It has drawn its substance out of the rills of life, animal and vegetable. The cruder forces of crystal and cell have met the sublimer elements of air and sky to augment this ever broadening, ever deepening river, which bears onward, like the river of my rest, to join with other streams more potent, and to glide

into the bosom of that parental ocean of life which gave the being it now gladly accepts. This human stream has also been a great burden-bearer. Commerce, art, learning, religion, are not the achievements of any one man, nation, or age, but the accumulated solutions, the aggregated deposits, of all lands and of all ages.

The brook-like attraction of the upper stream disappears lower down in the Wisconsin River. The mountain stream dances and sings, it ripples and jumps, it plays hide-and-go-seek with the sunlight, and when it can accommodate a fish, it speckles his shining sides with red and puts the blithe heart of a trout inside; but all this is lost before it reaches Tower Hill. Here it is staid and quiet, and still farther down our river joins hands with the Mississippi. It becomes more placid, more sluggish if you will, but the latter and not the former condition is the more glorious. If there seems to be more poetry in a trout-brook than in the Mississippi River spanned by airy bridges, in the midst of which is the mighty steel bridge at St. Louis, the marvel of modern engineering, if the Mississippi seems to us burdened and soiled by the freightage of the Ohio, the Illinois, Missouri,

Wisconsin, and countless smaller streams, it is because our imagination is weak and cannot grasp the complexity of the situation. We can enjoy the jingle of the brook ballad, but we are not yet equal to the Shakespearean poetry of the great river.

It is just so with the river of life. If we think the brook-like clearness of the Judean life twenty-five hundred years ago, or even the mountain streams of Greek glory, more interesting, more elevating, or more refined and refining than the burdened life of Paris, London, Boston, or — dare I say it? — Chicago, it is because we have not imagination enough to conceive of these broadened streams in their full relations, because we have not penetration enough to see what they hold in solution, to realize that their waters have come from the uplands of Judea, that these modern rivers contain the output of Grecian springs and Persian brooks as well as Keltic rivulets, Skandivavian tarns, and Gothic creeks. “Oh, but,” you say, “the water is so dirty; it is muddy and stench-laden by this time.” Do you know how the Rhone plunges into Lake Geneva a turbid, troubled stream, and how it passes out of the lake some

forty miles farther on with its waters blue, clear, and beautiful? Yet the same water enters at the upper end which escapes at the lower. And what of the mud that is left in the bottom of the lake? Give the Rhone time enough, it will make for those Swiss people splendid farming lands where now the waves roll high. By its deposits valleys have been formed in which great oaks have rooted. Wheat-fields, orchards, and flower-gardens are made of it. It contains the best kind of continent stuff. When Alpheus, the river god, pursued Arethusa, she sought safety in a fountain of pure water. But Alpheus, nothing daunted, seized the fountain in his arms and bore her along to the sea. She was none the less pure, but the god was the stronger. There is a great lesson which the religious and thought world needs to learn from this airy fable of the Greeks, thus told by Shelley:—

“ Arethusa arose  
From her couch of snows  
In the Acroceraunian Mountains, —  
From cloud and from crag,  
With many a jag,  
Shepherding her bright fountains,



She leapt down the rocks  
With her rainbow locks  
Streaming among the streams ; —  
Her steps paved with green  
The downward ravine  
Which slopes to the western gleams :  
And gliding and springing,  
She went ever singing,  
In murmurs as soft as sleep ;  
The Earth seemed to love her,  
And Heaven smiled above her,  
As she lingered towards the deep.”

“As she lingered towards the deep,” says the poet. But even the lingering is only seeming. The slackened stream moves with a mightier momentum than the hurrying brook, it carries a heavier burden, it is more beneficent. The Wisconsin River which washes the foot of Tower Hill is a part of the great water system of the globe. There is but one ocean, and all rivers are its feeders. The rivers have but one source, and that is the mother sea. Whether it be as invisible steam in the cylinder, floating vapor in the clouds, the mist overhanging the earth as morning drapery, snow, ice, spring, or river, water is the same everywhere, and preserves its balance of relations.

But when and how may we apply this lesson to

the River of Life? How can we teach man to believe that all religions are so many rivers bearing toward the ocean of Truth; that all nations are so many streams, tributaries to that splendid ocean of human brotherhood that is yet to be realized; and that in the last analysis, when, by process of distillation or of settling, the real essence of the souls of men is discovered, it will be found that all have emanated from the one paternal bosom of divine being? Oh, when shall we see man in his relations to the universe of life as we see the river in its relation to the universe of matter? When we have learned that lesson, courage will come so that we shall persist in our undertakings. Then tenderness will come, and teach us to be patient with the shortcomings of one another. And, last and best of all, vision will come to put meaning into what has heretofore been meaningless, to enable us to see harmony where we thought discord reigned, and we shall walk with unsandalled feet ground which before we rudely crushed with the hob-nails of irreverence and the profanity we visit upon the commonplace. Oh, that we might realize how universal are the witnesses to the universality of religion, and how near and ever present are the ministers of this

universal religion of the human heart, the religion testified to by nature and which is the most natural thing in nature.

I recall a revealing hour in a memorable drive that I treasure among my vacation memories, which are not all confined to horse-back experiences. The twilight found us driving through one of those open-mouthed, rich-fielded valleys in which Wisconsin abounds, a valley rimmed but not shut in by that bluff formation which attains the outlines but not the altitudes of mountains. We were so far removed in space and time from the city din and crowds that cities seemed to belong to other planets. Even the railroad, with its villages, telegraph poles, and whistling engines, was hours behind and as far beyond. It was such an evening and such a sunset as one sees but few times in life except in dreams. The western sky had changed from the daring saffron of an August sunset through sweeping darts of red into an opalescent stillness engirdling the brow of earth with a halo such as the older artists sought in vain to throw around the Christ head, seeking thereby a brilliancy that would glorify but not destroy the modesty, the sorrow, the retirement of the divine face. It was an evening in which even the birds

modified their tones and the insects seemed to stop and listen. The intermittent clang of cow-bells in the home nooks of the farms told that feeding-time was over and that milking-time had come. The dull hum of a threshing-machine came from the distance, speaking of an over-prolonged day to tired workers. On the farther hill, out against the radiant sky, stood as if self-poised in air the fairy disks of a windmill, like a diamond creating more light in itself. But its vans were quiet; even the windmill stood still. Only an occasional woman's call or child's cry broke the stillness, for the hum of the machine and the irregular tinkle of the bells seemed a part of the silence. The grating of our wagon wheels was intrusive, and we stopped to let the darkness steal over us with its revealing benedictions, bringing as it did the stars like lanterns in its hand.

While we stopped, a church bell, the Catholic angelus, sent its tones down from one of the mimic mountain tops at the far end of the valley. It was one of those rich, noble bells which the Catholic church knows where to put and how to use in far-off country nooks, a bell that emphasizes the quiet of quiet places. This bell pealed its message out in rhythmic waves over fields,

down the road, and up the lanes until it filled the valley. It was a message which the listener must interpret for himself. We knew too much of the life of that neighborhood, we had studied too closely the revealments of the sunlight to believe that we stood in any ideal valley, such as Rasselas sought or poets have sung. We knew that this was no dream Arcadia. The horizon-lines, so strongly yet delicately moulded, rimmed, as we knew, homes that were meagre and hearts that were barren. Those farm-houses sheltered sordid men, unhappy and overworked women. There were doubtless poorly tilled fields and sadly neglected minds in that valley. The morrow would bring hard tasks to reluctant hands, and would hear foul phrases and angry words from human lips in that neighborhood, but over all would stand in the to-morrow as in that twilight, the cross-crowned church. And three times the next day, and every day in the year, would that bell ring out its call to prayer, a call which would oftentimes fall upon ears reluctant and stupid, but it would still be a summons to the higher life. It would speak of the permanent, of the right, of the immortal hope, of the blessed dead, of God.

I do not forget that to many ears in the valley

that bell is only the Catholic bell, a bell of superstition, despised, perhaps dreaded; but back of all that is doctrinal, sectarian, or provincial, it is still the bell of religion, the voice of the ideal, pleading with men to look up, to look ahead, to look around, aye, to look down when need be, and find everywhere the revealing God, the increasing sanctity of being, and the besetting glory of life. Hung far out there in country space, it was as much a part of the valley as the scarred bluff and the murmuring brook. That bell belonged there that night as much as the opalescent sky, for it echoed somehow the voice that called the hills into being, the voice that will speak when the brook is dry. It was the voice of nature vocalizing itself in the lives and dreams of men. It was the voice of God phrasing itself in the aspirations of the race. It was the spirit of the universe climbing through atom and cell, up through flower and tree, through beast and bird, into the heart of woman and the hand of man, embodying itself on its upward way in its highest attainment yet on earth, the prophet's dream, the martyr's faith. The crudest, narrowest sectarian conventicle to be found in Wisconsin fronts toward the everlasting. It belongs to

nature and to nature's God. It is not only a part, but the highest part of the landscape in which it is set.

“For out of Thought's interior sphere  
These wonders rose to upper air ;  
And Nature gladly gave them place,  
Adopted them into her race,  
And granted them an equal date  
With Andes and with Ararat.”

I hope this parable of the bell has not led us so far afield that we cannot return to the parable of the river. The bell does not conflict, but reënforces the river lesson. May I not bring the analogies of the river still nearer home? Every individual life is a river rippling and gleaming like the trout-brook of childhood. The stream quiets as the movement broadens. In middle life it is laden with accumulated cares, burdened with other people's thoughts, the experiences and responsibilities of the world. How turbid are its waters at times, how unlike the spring purity of childhood, how unfit for the serenity and placidity of the ocean toward which it is tending. And still, not childhood but age is the more noble. Not at birth, but at maturity, are we most fit for companionship with angels. Then

are we nearest to God. Truly, Lowell is justified by the analogies of the river when he says :—

“ Not only around our infancy  
Doth heaven with all its splendors lie ;  
Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,  
We Sinais climb and know it not.

“ Over our manhood bend the skies ;  
Against our fallen and traitor lives  
The great winds utter prophecies ;  
Its arms outstretched, the druid wood  
Waits with its benedicite,  
And to our age’s drowsy blood  
Still shouts the inspiring sea.”

I apologize for none of the lapses of life. I excuse no complacency and recognize no grace in coarseness or selfishness. But I ask for respect for every living thing and plead for the sanctity of life in its essence, wherever or however found. The sun shines above you and its rays reach the waters of your life. You are a part of the wondrous stream of being, and your reflection and shadow enter into a landscape more charming than any combinations of river and valley, field and hillslope, wild wood and cultivated garden can produce.

But here I must break with my analogies and free myself from the tyranny of the fig-



ure. Suggestive and inspiring as are the analogies between a human life and a river, still more significant are the differences. Splendid as is the view of the Wisconsin River from the porch of Westhope cottage with its horizon-line of hills miles beyond the bridge, which it wears as a woman does a ring of silver fret-work on a finger that would otherwise be all alabaster, it is not so splendid as a gleam of love on a woman's face; it is not so inspiring as a ripple of laughter on the manly face bronzed with summer toil. No, the meanest man is more than the noblest river. The delta of the Nile has a sea-line of one hundred and eighty miles, and it is ninety miles from its shore to its apex, while that of the Mississippi contains an area of forty thousand square miles. But what are these deltas compared to the greater accumulations, the more sublime deposits of the river of human life, represented by a volume of Emerson's poetry, by the telephone, or by a library of a hundred volumes of wisely selected books? The Grand Cañon of Colorado is coarse and cheap work accomplished by the prentice hand of Nature, compared to the chiselled beauty of a Mater Dolorosa, a mother of grief.

As I sat quietly cultivating the acquaintance of the Wisconsin River, I often clothed it with personality, and added to all its other charms the superlative gift of consciousness. I imagined it endowed with a memory that reached back to the upland brooks. I fancied it poring over vague recollections of a joyous life among pebbles and merry gambols over stones, but all oblivious of its snow birth or the rock womb from which it sprang. It might well remember its earlier augmentations, the cramped life at the Dells, the arbitrary interference of mill-dams and bridges, and now it begins to feel a burden of anxiety for the future. It has vague premonitions of a sea toward which it is tending, where from excess of glory and majesty it will again lose itself.

What fancy gave to the river, fact gives to man. All that and more is the lot of the humblest mortal, and therein lies the crowning mission of religion, — to give to man some realizing sense of the significance and responsibility of this self-consciousness; and any reasoning from analogy, from man to river and from river back to man, that forgets this mighty difference is delusive and treacherous. Herein dawns my

hope of immortality. This existence with a memory is to me a pledge of existence with a future consciousness. I am not dismayed by the immortality that is vouchsafed to the river. Glad and grateful will I be for the life that now is, which, river-like, is permitted to flow through glades of green, past rocks of strength, a life that is allowed to shelter joyous creatures, to reflect splendid scenery, to give back the colors of the sun, to water parched fields, and then, when its course is run, to find a home in the bosom of him who gave it being, to vanish, not into nothingness, but into reality, to be conserved in ways I wot not of for the perpetual uses of the God of life. I do not recoil from this kind of immortality; I will not rebel against it. Life is still a gift, a magnificent privilege. The life that ends in absorption and climbs to redistribution is insured to the river; and if I may fulfil the mission of a river, however humble, I will be content.

But I am more than a river. The forces of the soul are bound together, not by the external law of gravitation, but by an inner chord of consciousness, and thus, as it seems to me, guarantees a continuity transcending all the rounds

of matter. Because I remember I rejoice in individuality. Being a river with a memory, I become a river with a hope, conscious of my own limitations, and knowing that this is the sublimest miracle of all miracles, the highest surprise, the latest achievement, and divinest unfolding of life. I find myself placed, not at the last end of a declining series, but at the fore-end of an ascending one; and so the river lifts me into dreams, expectations, faiths, that it cannot itself attain. Many a time in summers gone by have I in my wanderings touched my lips to rock-encradled springs, and watched the pure water start from its ice-cold caves on its long journey to the sea. Can we not, should we not, think again when we touch our lips to love's fountains, and see an impulse of kindness shoot from the privacy of a hidden desire out of the caverns of hungry eyes, or a spring of the water of life which will bear its way on to its celestial home, to its deathless destiny?

Science is compelled to assume the existence of an atom, which no one has seen, an indestructible unit, that which cannot be divided; and upon this assumption it works out its chemistry of nature. Some such unit of meas-

ure suggests itself to me in a self-centred soul, a directing will, a conscious river, a stream with a memory, a tide of life with a hope.

I uncover in the presence of the man of science. I ask his help and gratefully take his hand, following him wherever he may lead, so long as he is true to his mission. But the river teaches that all science is not analytic. As I watched that living picture from my rest-place, I found that all the river was not told by the surveyor, the geologist, and the chemist, though I longed to know all these might tell me of it,—its length, breadth, and depth, its component parts, and the nature of the cargo it was carrying to the sea; but those properties did not make up the river. I must seek it in its settings of lights and shades. My picture was framed with bluffs three hundred feet high, and these were matted with rugs woven out of tall tree-tops. My river was bordered with shadows, emblazoned with sunrises, haloed with sunsets, and all these had more or less perfect communication with that something which stood at the receiving end of the telescope in my eye. There was something that was in telephonic communication with my ear; and these tints,

tones, and tempers, all seen, heard, felt, and thought, were also *facts* of nature, realities of being, objects of scientific thought, and he who would slight any one of them, particularly the more evanescent facts of thought and feeling, is grossly unscientific, though he may do it all in the name of science. So of this river of human life, this stream of consciousness we call soul. We must take it in its settings, study it in its glow as well as in its gloom. This hope, this hunger, this audacious faith, this majestic trust, this heroic defiance even of death itself, is a fact, a real, solid, splendid fact in the universe, before which true science is at least as respectful as it is in the presence of sand drifts and alluvial deposits.

So it is that I let one river interpret for me the other, but will not let the lesser fix the bounds or establish the conditions of the larger.

Are these hopes too high, these reasonings too subtle for everyday use? Let us then, like Abt Vogler in Browning's poem, get our feet on the earth again, and seek "the C major of common life." Let us think of the solemn river of life in its ceaseless flux as that which comes from a source mystic and bears to a destiny mysterious, but which, between the two horizon-lines of hallowed

ignorance, does expose to our view a delightful mid-stream section. The little portion of the now and here that comes within our study and experience is still enough to prove that it is related to all that is fair and real, that it flows toward a destiny which it holds in common with the Lord of the universe, that it works persistently, silently, as a stream "that would make glad the city of God." The river of my vacation remains bordered with its woodlands and its meadows under the brows of moulded hills, but the River of Life which it quickened is not confined to lines of space and not conditioned by Wisconsin landscapes.

May the River of our Life, quickened, clarified, sanctified by contact with its humbler sister river among the hills, flow through sluggish brains and quicken in them thought growths, reach sand-parched hearts and convert them into flower-gardens, touch the roots of paralyzed wills and nerve them with a strength to battle like the pine on the rocks, to defy winter storms and summer droughts, to persist in perennial greenness, bearing the fruit of generosity, open-handed helpfulness, and earnest work! Thus will the tree of our life be watered by the stream that "makes glad the city of God."





## EARTH'S FULNESS

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,  
Healthy, free, the world before me,  
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,  
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need  
nothing,  
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,  
Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,  
I do not want the constellations any nearer,  
I know they are very well where they are,  
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

Still here I carry my old delicious burdens,  
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever  
I go,  
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,  
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.

WALT WHITMAN.

## EARTH'S FULNESS

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. — PSALM XXIV. 1.

THERE is a wholesome and robust piety in this text that shames the mincing, halting indecision of the cautious who try to pick their way through what is to them a profane and secular world. The earlier geologists thought of the earth as consisting of a thin crust encircling a burning core. The later geologists are coming to think of it as essentially solid, — not a shell filled with fluid matter, but rigid to the centre. Something like this change is going on in the theological estimate of the world. The elder theologies formed scarcely sanctities enough to make a shell. They discovered here and there a divine touch, a holy spot, an occasional sacred day; but they thought of all the rest of life as some kind of devil-stuff, to come into contact with which was to expose oneself to blight. Opposed to this is the faith of the

psalmist, which is being reëmphasized in these days by science. He taught that the earth is the Lord's all the way through, and that it teems everywhere with a divine fulness. The old sanctities stand, but new sanctities are added thereto. The holy land is not alone on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean; the holy word is not confined to Hebrew and Greek text; and he who died on Calvary is not the only son of the eternal Father. He who would study the mystic depths of law, order, beauty, and utility need not now confine himself to archæological subjects. He has but to put his ear close to the breast of earth anywhere and he hears the rhythmic pulsing of her great heart. He need but stand uncovered anywhere and cast his eyes upward to find himself over-arched by Infinity. The squadrons of the sky sail the upper seas over every land, and the horizon-line is the best thing in every landscape.

In search of rest, adventure, and health, my vacation tramp this time carried me, in the company of a friend, into the pinery depths of northern Wisconsin. Together we walked more than two hundred miles, consorting with woodmen, lodging with half-breeds, interviewing Ind-

ians, feeding on wild berries, and fighting mosquitoes. And we found something more valuable than health,—a restoration of courage, a renewal of the spirit. We found verification of the stalwart faith of the psalmist that “the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.” I may not yet preach the sermon of this vacation tramp, and so I apply myself to the humbler task of recounting a few of the many illustrations of my text which we found by the way. I shall be content if I can provide the raw material out of which you may construct your own sermon. Take it and weave it into a fabric of your own.

Emerson says: “The best part of a boy’s schooling is that which he gets on his way to and from school,” and the best part of our visit to Duluth was the two-hundred-mile walk through the wilderness. We arrived at Duluth sadly frayed out at the edges, so much be-draggled that our friends would have been loath to acknowledge us. The hotel clerk eyed us suspiciously, and granted us accommodations reluctantly. But little recked we. We had walked through naves, aisles, and choirs of cathedrals

greater than those of Cologne or York. We had found beauties of nature at points not down in the guide-books, to which no "tourists' tickets" were obtainable. We had had lovely glimpses of human nature, revelations of human passion and sympathy in lives unclaimed by priest and outside of all church statistics. We had been hunting without a gun and fishing without a rod, and our game-bags were loaded. Alas for him who goes *seeking* his game; the true hunter tarries where he is and his game comes to him. The most foolish of all game-seekers are the social lion hunters,—those who go in quest of interesting people,—for such game is everywhere. The lines of poetry and pathos run parallel with those of evolution. The dullest of birds is more cunning than the wisest of fishes, and the most primitive of fishes is a greater marvel than the most elaborated crystal; yet the powdered quartz we call sand is star-stuff. What reaches of divine fulness are found between the grain of sand and the man whom we call stupid! The greatest stupidity is that which finds anything stupid in the world. The soul is irreligious that finds the story of any hearth-stone pointless, any mother

uninteresting, any babe unattractive. Let the man be ever so ignorant and marred howsoever by vice, the culture that recoils from him is a veneer, and the piety that dismisses him with an epigram is a varnished delusion. The first business of culture, as of religion, is to liberate the soul from the social tyranny, the blindness of the aristocrat, the elegant conceits and polite imbecilities which sometimes mask under the name of good society.

Hanging over the railing of a rustic bridge that spanned a forest river, we came one day upon a fisherman to whom the adjectives "worthless" and "aimless" would seem to fit if they ever belonged to a human being. In the winter season he cooked in the pinery, but summer-time he mostly fished, he told us. We were anxious for dinner. "If you are willin' to go out of your way 'bout half a mile I think wife can give you some bread and milk over at the shanty." Almost any way in these woods was our way, particularly if it led to bread and milk, and we accepted the invitation. Suddenly we emerged out of the dense shades into a little garden-patch of a clearing, flecked with sunlight, with a newly built little shanty in the midst of it. A smiling, dainty

young wife at the doorway bade us welcome, and the sweetest little babe in its white gown with its edgings and insertions slept sweetly in the cradle. Far away from neighbors and what seemed all privileges we were suddenly ushered into the presence of fireside sanctities. While we ate the lightest of bread and drank the sweetest of milk the father revelled in the delights of fatherhood as he frolicked with his babe, and the gentle little wife confided to us her domestic pride over the fact that they had at last settled down and had a home of their own which, if they prospered, they hoped to "make a pretty spot some day." We went away saying, There is more to our fisherman than we thought. Even his fishing is justified in the love of the pretty wife and the enthusiasm of the bouncing babe. They too are items in the fullness of the earth.

Two days later the deep silence of the woods, unbroken by man for several hours, was intensified by the sound of children's voices, hid away deep in the jungle. We pushed toward the sound through tangled undergrowth and matted briars until, hot and torn, we suddenly came upon an Indian bivouac, a camp of half-tamed Chippewas out gathering ginseng root for the white man's



market. Most of the party were at their gathering. Only two or three mother squaws were left to watch a dozen or more children who were rolling on beds of fern. One of the women, having caught the knack of her more civilized white sister, was making over an old skirt into a child's garment. One was cooking the supper in a gypsy kettle over a pine-knot fire, and another was smoking, with a little diamond-eyed baby tumbling about her like a playful kitten, while she crooned over him as gently as if she were dressed in softest silks and her slippered feet rested on richest carpet. To us she was stolid and silent until my friend offered his watch in exchange for her babe, when the fire flashed in her eyes. She convulsively clasped her babe, and, with the dignity of a queen, waved our insolence out of the camp. "We have learned at least," said my friend, "that baby talk is the same in Chippewa as in English, and that mother-love is older and more fundamental than pen, ink, and the spelling-school." The fulness of the earth was again illustrated.

Several days farther on, a man fresh from the "dump," encased in the dust and dirt that comes to one shovelling on the railroad, his clothes so

ragged that he was picturesque, politely accosted us and begged for advice. He was from Canada, and was soon to start out in search of a government homestead in the United States. Would we advise as to the best place to seek it? Said he, "I have six children who are still in the primitive innocence of childhood, and I want to go where I can keep them thus, where we may expect good schools and the influence of church and Sunday-school in due time, for, sirs, I believe in such influences, notwithstanding the fact that so many of the preachers are behind the times and are trying to evade and deny instead of forcing the conclusions of science, which are but man's discovery of God's own truth." This and much more, expressed in fluent English, came from this knight of the shovel, who finally capped our surprise by throwing at my learned friend with greatest ease the first verses of St. John's Gospel in the original Greek. He said his education had been such as befitted a gentleman. His mother had owned an oat-mill in Ireland, but she was a woman who could never say "no" when there was suffering, and when the famine came she gave so much away that her property became involved, and she lost it all. We encouraged this man to

travel toward Dakota, whither his heart was already yearning. The new home, when founded, he said, was to be called "Shane Castle," after the old place in Ireland, now owned by Lord Somebody of England. As we left him my companion wondered if there was a minister within two hundred miles of us who could have quoted his New Testament Greek as accurately as did this scholarly laborer, in whose life Greek and wheelbarrows were blended. We had found another witness that "the earth is the Lord's," another item in "the fulness thereof," another illustration for the sermon which still remains unwritten.

"How do you like to live up here?" I asked of a pale, over-worked, sad-eyed pioneer's wife in her log house hid away in the forest depths.

"A little better now, sir, since we have had school for the children. I was very unhappy until that was accomplished."

"How far away is the school?"

"Two miles, through the woods all the way."

"How many children in the district?"

"Twelve."

"How large is the district?"

"Six miles square."

"How many of these children can reach the school?"

"There are seven in the school this summer, sir; my three, a neighbor's boy, and three half-breeds."

A mile or so farther on we met the teacher, a slip of a girl, apparently not more than fourteen years of age. She seemed a frail trellis for the climbing vine of a child's mind to fasten upon and lift itself thereby toward the sunlight of knowledge. But weary mother, boisterous children, and simple little school-teacher were all further items in the wealth of the world, further witnesses that "the earth is the Lord's," and telling illustrations for the sermon, when the preacher comes with insight sufficient to apply the illustrations and adequately enforce my text.

One night we lodged at what was once an old logging camp. Our host was a Frenchman, our hostess, his wife, an Indian woman. It was a night of dramatic unrest. The "accommodations" represented the climax of our physical discomfort during the trip. But while we were waiting for a breakfast to which we did justice by utterly neglecting it, a young Indian, our host's brother-in-law, undertook to set me right in

politics. I found him better informed than I was in some directions. He probably had the better of the argument. He had attended the reservation school. He knew he had "not had much chance," but he "tried to keep posted." He read a paper whenever he could find one, and he always voted, though the polling place was thirty miles away.

Basil Dennis, the half-breed boatman who rowed us up the St. Louis River, could readily talk three languages, Chippewa, English, and French, and could read the first two. He was a sincere and devout Catholic, and he could build a fire out of wet wood in the rain and do many other things that neither of us could do at all. Here is material enough for a sermon. Let him who is equal to it write it.

"Well, does such a trip leave you with better or worse opinion of your kind?" asked my city neighbor upon my return. "Better," I replied, "increasingly better." My faith in men and my hope for a better religion and a nobler culture found great encouragement in the woods, greater perhaps than if I had sought it in the company of those who grow weary in carrying an unappropriated pack of blessings, who are denied the

uplifting power of meagre surroundings and the inspiration of hard circumstances, who are bereft of the ministrations of the "angels with ugly faces" that Emerson talks about. Pessimism and cynicism grow more luxuriantly upon the city avenues than in the Indian reservations or in the homes of pioneers. These diseases fasten themselves readily upon those whose nerves are not toughened by want and whose hearts are not sub-soiled by sacrifice. There is more hope for the half-formed, unendowed people in the clearing than for those who are made imbecile by too many luxuries. Downy couches, attractive bookshelves, and sumptuous boards give rise to complaints and groans never heard among children who are nursed in hardships and toughened by struggle. Let the men and women who find themselves growing mean in their wealth and stingy in their superfluities take to the woods long enough to find a sermon to their needs. Let them remember that it is wholesome once in a while to reduce life to its lowest terms, to throw away as many of the conventionalities and externalities as possible, to bring one's condition down to a woollen-shirt and bread-and-milk basis in order to find how much there is left. If there are yet remaining

tenderness, hopefulness, thoughtfulness, mother heart and father strength, and a willingness and ability to work, then surely God, Jesus, Bible, and church are left resting, not upon elegant or questionable accessories, but upon the permanent realities of life.

In the national gallery in London I once saw a little Dutch painting of the holy family, by one of the Van der Weydens. It showed the holy mother with the plainest of Flemish faces. The picture was flat and hard. The mother face had in it the minimum of what is generally called "the ideal," but her eyes were red with weeping and the homely features were furrowed with pain and wrinkled with grief, and this little picture brought the tears that Raphael's, in the adjoining room, had failed to bring. Were I a painter, I would love to paint a madonna and child with the Indian squaw and her pappoose as models. I would leave out the nimbus, and the Christ child should have no halo about its head, but I would put in the strong lines of maternal anxiety, the intensity of the wild mother's love for the unspeakable gift of a child, and the helpless babe's dumb dependency upon a mother's hand and a mother's breast, though they were

those of an Indian squaw. And I would add thereto the upward push, the outward reach of the creative forces of human kind that are manifest in the divine daring of a baby, even of an Indian baby, for, however conservative he may become later along, the Indian baby is a radical, and radicalism is the pledge of progress. If I failed to put a revelation of the divine into this picture the fault would be mine, not the subject's, for God was revealing himself when he taught the Indian babe to nestle, and the Indian mother to croon.

“Mamma, there is a beautiful vine growing down by the creek, all covered with flowers, and it winds around the tree as prettily as if it was tame,” said the little boy. Alas, how many make the mistake of this child and credit the grace and beauty to some peculiar training, instead of to the opulent stock of the race. It is the nature of the plant itself, the twining tendrils have caught no trick of the conservatory. The output and uplift of all nature is in the spiral pull of that clinging tendril. The climbing vine testifies to the divinity of earth and the fulness thereof. It is a part of the mystery of the wildwood. So is it with human



nature. There was in my half-breed who read a paper when he had the chance and went thirty miles to vote, the beginning of a Charles Sumner, whose politics was shot through and through with conscience and converted thereby into statesmanship.

On the borders of one of the many pine lakes far beyond the sound of the railway whistle, we found lodgment one night with an energetic Dane who had once been on the police force in the city of Chicago, but had been driven into the woods by the great fire. We found him intelligent, hospitable, manly, but he had carried with him from Chicago the policeman's habit and privilege of profanity, which, in the solitudes of the woods, had grown into something akin to art. So unique, fresh, and unceasing was the picturesque flow of this man's oaths that we had no heart to check them by suggesting our profession, but next morning, when the truth had to come out, and he realized that he had been entertaining a pair of ministers, his countenance fell, and in a humble, apologetic tone he said, "Gentlemen, I am sorry I troubled you with my rough language, for I can speak proper words. I do not allow my children to say the words I say,

but you know how it is up here in the woods, we get careless. Perhaps we would quit if more gentlemen like yourselves came up to see us." During the remaining two hours of our visit not an improper accent fell from his lips ; but, must I confess it ? there came somewhat of dulness with the increased propriety. His questions took a thoughtful turn. We found that he was not so far in the woods but that the besetting problems of the day had reached him. Single-handed and alone, with a Lutheran training and a Catholic wife, he had worked out for himself a short-metre kind of faith. He had adjusted for himself science and theology, had fitted after a fashion the Bible into his life, and, spite of his lax speech, he had become the trusted man in the settlement, the leader of the little community of which he was centre, the administrator of dead men's estates, and the arbitrator of live men's quarrels. That man's confession and the two hours' "proper language" have laid a burden upon all of us, and we are forced to ask, "Are there not many such waiting a touch of elbows with gentle-men and gentle-ladies to make gentle-men and gentle-ladies of themselves ?"

"Weeds are plants whose uses are not yet

found out," says Emerson. Too large a realm in the human as in the botanical world is relegated to this dominion of weeds. There are those excused from our attention and dismissed from our sympathy through our ignorance rather than through their worthlessness. Daily we overlook the marvels of the roadside and the divine beauty in common things and common people.

After having refreshed ourselves from "the old oaken bucket that hung in the well," which we found adjoining the log house in a clearing, my botanical friend with his glass showed our host the seeds of some of the weeds for which the farmer had just apologized. The mute astonishment of the farmer broke into a refreshing laugh. He clapped his hands and shouted, and declared it was the most wonderful thing he had ever seen in his life. Calling to the barefooted boy who had neglected his stint of weeding, he exclaimed: "Come, Johnnie! Come here, Johnnie, and see what the gentleman has. A mite of a glass that makes these specks of seeds look as big as beans and as pretty as birds' eggs. Come, lad; you will never forget it." While the lad was looking, he continued: "I would not have believed it,

sir, if I had not seen it with my own eyes. What a powerful glass that is! What a deal of money it must have cost! Gentlemen, that is more wonderful than any show I have ever been at. I wish you could stay, that the other children might see it." The glass was probably worth a dollar, and perhaps it magnified fifteen or twenty diameters; but even so simple an instrument opened up a new world to that man and flooded his soul with divine ecstasy because it had led him a little farther out on the lines of God, a little nearer the inscrutable secrets of nature. It gave him a heavenly lift, and evermore he was a little nearer to God. Who can tell to what proportions the momentary revelation of the single lens has grown in that backwoods settlement by this time? Surely, the road of knowledge is a path that leads to God, and the telescope and microscope are commentators on the text.

But I would not belie the woods with overstatement. The forests are not sentimental. They impart no limp optimism. There is ample verification of Tennyson's line that describes "nature red in tooth and claw." It does not need a John Stuart Mill to see in the woods the fierce forces of the universe crushing life

mercilessly under their rolling wheels. There is exemplified the fiendish impulses that are still rife in human breasts, the selfish lusts that are still rampant in human nature; and, alas! these revelations are not confined to the woods. The "big Indian" of the old tales, in whose belt hung the clustered scalps of his murdered victims, has his fellows who walk our streets in civilized garb with more subtle emblems of their triumphs. They do business on our Wall Streets, they ride in our palace cars, they live in fine houses that are not far to seek. Notwithstanding the men who have grown strong in other men's defeats, who have thriven upon the blood of others, the forest teaches me to stand by the stalwart piety of my text; and I will believe that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," because the Lord is still a be-coming force in the world, his creation is not yet finished. Nature and human nature are yet very incomplete, but enough has been accomplished in both fields, enough has been realized everywhere to justify the belief that the movement is ever from good to better, that crudities do fall out by the way, that evil is shorter lived than virtue, and that only the excellent is immortal.



SPIRITUAL VALUES OF COUNTRY  
AND CITY

For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
And mountains ; and of all that we behold  
From this green earth ; of all the mighty world  
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,  
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognize  
In nature and the language of the sense,  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
Of all my moral being.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.



## SPIRITUAL VALUES OF COUNTRY AND CITY

Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee. — JOB xii. 8.

And he shewed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God : her light was like unto a stone most precious. . . . And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof. — REVELATION xxi. 10, 24.

I HAVE been taking Job's advice. I have been listening to the teachings of earth from my summer shelter at Westhope cottage on Tower Hill. From that sightly ledge upon which is laid my bed that serves for day as for night, I have watched the solemn flow of the tireless river, I have communed with creeping and flying things. I have revelled in the silences of breathless evenings, and have watched undaunted the rise of the tempest and the fury of the storm.

The first thing the earth gave to me was rest. The ceaseless tug of circumstances, the unending din of the city, the eternal conflict between right and wrong, seemed for the time to be lifted out

of reach, and there came relaxation of nerves, dreamless sleep, a growing appetite, familiar evidences of health, beatific witnesses to physical restoration and prosperity. These bodily benedictions have their spiritual equivalents. With the soundness of the flesh comes a sanity of the mind; for, say what we will, robust digestion makes for moral courage, and a good circulation does have to do with the loving life and fearlessness in the face of death. I know the opposite truth, and love to dwell upon the power of mind over matter. Let the mental healer seek his strongest statement and practice his most skilful art, and I will gladly recognize the truth of the one and the legitimacy of the other. But he must not be disrespectful to my bountiful Mother Earth, who has cradled me upon her brown bosom, fanned me with her green boughs. She is mother of my thoughts as of my body. She is a trusty nurse, who ministers to spirit through body, makes spirit in body, reveals spirit by body. The country is the home of the spirit, the cradle of the emotions, the teacher of the heart. Political science confidently counts upon the stalwartness of the yeoman conscience. In every great national extremity it has been the strong

right arm of the country toiler, the slow but sure movement of the country conscience, the sturdy farmer resource, that has been the indispensable element of triumph. In England, over and over again, it has been the farmer roundhead against the city cavalier. Peasant France has corrected the aberration of Parisian nobles; the Continental yeoman brought the defeat and surrender of Cornwallis, and made corporate the philosophic dream of the Declaration of Independence. The earth, in giving sound sleep, wholesome fatigue, vigorous appetite, gives to conscience an edge that will not turn, to will a vigor that will not surrender.

But the earth speaks directly to mind. It is the university of the senses. The new intelligence rests not upon the theories of the masters, nor the statements of the texts, but upon the facts of nature. Knowledge is not a matter of words, but an acquaintance with things. The appeal is not now to majorities or to "revelation." The priest's dictum does not persuade. Questions of sociology, like questions of theology, are so large, far-reaching, and intricate that he is wisest who most readily confesses his incapacity. Wisdom lies in mental modesty. The profoundest solution of

such problems lies in giving them up. The best evidence that the mind has little right to speak and that the opinions are worthy of little consideration is the evidence that the holder is sure that he knows all about it. There are many great questions which only the fool will claim the mastery of. But in the country the mind is permitted to study the simpler lessons of God, the lore of clover-fields and fern beds, the poetry of grass and flowers, the science of leaf and bird. From my berth on the hillslope I could study the diligence of the woodpecker, the enterprise of the squirrel, and the growth of the mosquito in his aquatic stage, for the wigglers in the rain-barrel at the back of the house were interesting and harmless objects of study.

In this age, when words are being subordinated to things, when the fairy tales of old are being outdone by the more bewitching tales of science, the country offers increasing inspiration to the mind. The delicate investigations, skilful experiments, and the necessary generalizations from country facts and emergencies, indicate the processes by which the spiritual vision of the coming generations may be clarified. By these methods are the prophets and

seers of the future to be trained. The hornet which finds for his mud house secure lodgment on the rafters of some of the Tower Hill cottages, the wasp in his city pavilioned in papier-maché of home manufacture, the ants in their ordered colonies, the mud-worms in the pool, the swallows in their rocky catacombs, are humble phenomena, but upon the study of these and such as these rest the foundations upon which must be built the sound sense, the ordered thought of the future concerning capital and labor, the state and the individual.

“The ink of science is more precious than the blood of the martyrs,” is a radical saying from the Arabic, a saying to be verified by the history of the future. The power of observation that makes one equal to the perplexities of the forest and skilled in the manipulation of nature’s elements, the thrift of the pioneer, the sagacity of the hunter, are spiritual acquirements. The frontier settler was the forerunner of Darwin, and Darwin is himself a prophecy. He represents a fraternity yet to come, a brotherhood of men who through science will find communion with the potency of the universe, the eternal power, the ever present and ever living God.

The country is not the place of many printed books, but the infinite variety that everywhere impinges upon sight and hearing, the ever pressing marvel of being, the bewitching beauty of river and wood, the symphonies that combine the trill of the tree-toad, the sighing of the wind, the bellowing of the cow, and the finer notes from the silvery throats of the birds, possess direct mental value, they are themselves creators of intellect. To bring oneself into an appreciation of these simple realities of nature requires a finer mental endowment than that which shaped and preserved the fairy folk-lore of antiquity. The myths of the world are its child science. They indicate the way in which untrained intellects often miss the reality. Those who "speak to the earth" are taught tales more marvellous than that of Cinderella, are made familiar with creatures more airy than Puck or Ariel, and are brought into immediate contact with powers exceeding those of a Hercules or a Samson, greater than the might of the Titans. Indolent indeed is the mind that finds not something of this intellectual quickening in the country to-day. Alas for him who returns from his vacation to his city work untutored by these country forces, with no con-

scious sense of mental growth and intellectual enlargement.

The Indian, it is said, puts his ear to the ground and, listening intently, detects the approaching tramp of the foe or feels the tread of the buffalo herd which he is seeking. He who puts his ear close to the bosom of Mother Earth and listens to the simple runes of the insects, or studies the circulation in the fern frond, will in due time hear the approaching tramp of the human army that makes for civilization and peace. The fine sense there developed will help solve the perplexities of the state. It will purge the altar of its superstition and rear the temple of reason, which will also be the temple of trust. The good saint of the Catholic Church, Thomas à Kempis, anticipated me and put all this in happier phrase when he said: "If indeed thy heart were right, then would every creature be to thee a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine."

This suggests another great contribution which the country gives to the spirit. Nature is a school of faith. It restores the trust which is ever being broken by the clash of selfish interests, the clamor of wordy creeds, the rivalry

of sect. However banks break, nature is always solvent. Building and Loan Associations too often prove a delusion and a snare to the toiler on account of the most dastardly treachery of which the modern man is guilty, the speculating treachery of so-called "trusted officials," the men who, in the hope of private gain, dare risk another's property. But the forests continue to grow, the oak adds its annual ring of fibre, and though the farmer has his dire anxieties caused by drought and flood, scorching heat, and untimely frost, yet deep in the heart of nature, long before it found a place on Hebrew scroll, was written the text, "Seed time and harvest shall not fail." The seasons keep their ceaseless rounds. The sun keeps his engagements unerringly. When humanity disappoints, the moon holds; and from its regularity there rises in the heart of man a tide of confidence in the eternal as surely as the waves of the ocean turn their tidal front toward its beckonings.

The genesis of the religious sentiment is a matter about which scholars disagree, but all are agreed that nature very early became a preacher to the soul. The universe soon began



to minister to the heart of man. The winds were early messengers to the spirit; indeed they were both symbol and essence of spirit to our forefathers, as early language shows. The spring, the brook, and the river were to Jesus himself the most suggestive symbols of the eternal life and the paternal spirit. "The truth that I shall give to you shall be to you a well of water springing up into eternal life." "The love of nature is a great gift," says Lubbock; and it must ever mark the ripened as well as the gifted soul. The heart distorted with cares and torn with passion may well "flee as a bird to the mountain," that in the solitudes of nature it may find the "peace that passeth all understanding." Rock and tree and brook will become a balm to the fevered soul, bring salvation to the sinning spirit, restore the fainting, lift the fallen, and save the lost.

It is often felt that the lessons of nature are too subtle, cold, and impassioned save for the cultured and the already redeemed spirit. That is to say, its ministrations are supposed to be chiefly for those who least need a ministry. This suggests still another spiritual value of the country. It makes religion simple, faith

unconscious. Life began in unconsciousness. On its higher levels it again becomes unconscious. When life awoke to a sense of its own existence, when the personal pronoun in the first person singular came to be, when the soul could say, "I am I," then the soul of man was born. When he became a creature of introspection and analysis, he became as one of the gods, knowing good from evil. Then he passed the great crisis of nature's Eden; he left the joys of the brute and entered into the bitterness of man. He had "eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil." But this self-consciousness may be developed into a disease, and on the higher spirals of life the soul swings around again into a divine unconsciousness of self. Nature helps us up this higher incline. In our city life we are so conspicuous that there is danger of our becoming abnormally anxious concerning appearances. Physically and spiritually we are over-concerned with clothes, clothes for the mind as well as for the body. The country has a tendency to take the peacock out of the woman, the pedant out of the man, and artificiality out of the child. There is something ridiculous which finally grows into pathos

in the city woman who changes her dress two or three times a day at the countryside, who takes her Saratoga trunks to her shelter under the trees and neglects the great panorama of the skies in her devotion to the mirror. Poor soul! What does the bluebird care for her laundered stripes? What note does the squirrel take of her silken sashes? The frills on the child's dress, however artistically conceived, are crude and coarse compared to the dainty scallops of the maple-leaf. The milliner cannot match the blue of the gentian or the red of the cardinal-flower. Slowly but surely the boy drops into jeans, the little girl becomes familiar with her own brown feet and is not ashamed of them, and the woman, however fashionable, becomes ashamed of her laundry bills and drops into monochrome, thus blending into the landscape instead of blazing upon it.

All this symbolizes a parallel change of heart and of mind. Not the smart things that other folks have said which one remembers, not the bright quotations from the book, not the tiresome repartee of the boarding-house counts under the trees, but the kindly accents, the saving common-sense. It is the sanity of the commonplace, the

sanctity of simplicity, that is the grace which the earth imparts. Nature breaks the bubbles of our conceits and chastens us with humility. The sickly anxiety about one's own soul is lost in communion with the Over-soul. The camp-meeting, at which the soul is pricked into a fever of self anxiety and the heart is turned wrong-side out for inspection, is giving way, as men learn the language of earth, to summer schools of quiet study, to science schools of investigation and observation, to Chautauqua circles of those who seek communion with great minds, all turning the thoughts away from self, setting the heart in harmony with nature. "The simplicity of the gospel of Christ" is a happy phrase of the Wesleys and their spiritual companions. The gospel of Jesus was redolent of the fields. His inspiration came from sparrows and lilies. He was a rustic of the kingdom of heaven. He was an apostle of simplicity, a teacher of the religion of out-of-doors. O that this gracious lesson of the earth might stay with us, reducing our theological as well as our physical wardrobe to the plainness of his seamless robe!

This country religion inspires the plainness though not the stiffness of the Quaker garb, the

simplicity though not the arbitrariness of the old Methodist discipline on these matters. The ethics of the country relieves us of the elaborateness of the silly wardrobes, the tyranny of the dressmaker, and the shameful costliness in money and strength of the city plumings and flutings. A summer by the riverside, an intimacy with the trees, a familiarity with the grass, ought to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of one who is prone to smile and wink at any allusions to this high crime against the spirit, instead of taking seriously to heart the tendency to spiritual degeneracy that springs from the evasion of the ethics of dress.

To recapitulate: A study of nature is a study of God. Control of the simple facts of rock and herb and bird is a preparation, I am tempted to say an indispensable preparation, for the successful control of the higher and more subtle facts of the shop, the library, the prison, and the asylum. Again, this study ripens into a faith, resting, shall I say, in the divine faith of nature. The inevitability of law, the unbending order of the universe, the unrelenting severity of the seasons, give the soul a trust and a resignation too often missed in our man-made schemes and the tink-

ered creeds of conventions. It gives us simplicity, the unconscious life of the soul that is ministered to by the immensities of the heavens, by the perfection of a dewdrop. To him whose spirit is at one with nature comes the self-forgetfulness of the higher soul. "He loses himself in the perfect whole." Acorn and oak, blue-bell and evening star, plaintive call of the whip-poor-will and roll of thunder, the mysteries found in the spoonful of mud as well as the record deciphered in the quarry, all shame the egotism of man, rebuke the self-seeking of the world, expose the shamelessness of man's pretensions, the foolishness of his decorations. The higher peace comes to the soul when once is borne in upon it a sense of relationship with all these; when one becomes certain that he is a link in the endless chain of the universe, a part of the divine unity.

The writer of the Apocalypse, though enjoying the full benefit of the solitudes of Patmos, lifted his eyes from the brown earth with which he might have had full communion, and saw the fullness of life, the ultimate triumph, the ideal condition as a great city, "coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: her

light was like unto a stone most precious. . . . And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof." John as well as Job was oracular. This rhapsody of the recluse is prophetic. Not only in the quiet of nature, but on the thronging street, in the tumult of human nature and in the triumph of art does God minister to man. So let us turn to the city and discover some of its spiritual values to reconcile us if possible to the life of the city as to the country. There is valuable discipline in the struggle of the city. There is inspiration in the triumphs of man, and the highest achievements of the human mind necessitate the city. The old saying that "God made the country but man made the town" is misleading. If God made the country for man, he also made the city with and through man. The highest achievement of nature is human nature, and the greatest outcome of human nature is the complex life of the city. London began in the ant-hill. Paris is a perfected hive. In passing out of the country into the city we do not pass out of the sunshine into the shadows, but out of light into more light. The highest as well as the latest science is sociology, the science of society. Solitary man is necessarily a fractional man. He

reaches his maximum only when he joins his fellows in corporate life.

In trying to grasp some of the spiritual values of the city as well as of the country, let us begin with the grimmest inspiration. There is spiritual profit in the awful struggle for existence which is going on in every great city. In the country man fights with nature. His primary struggle is with the weather and the weeds. In the city man enters the fiercer battle of man with man. It is class against class, trade against trade. It is not for me here to discuss the principles of competition in trade; but let us try to get a crumb of comfort out of the thought that there is a spiritual compensation even in this struggle. "The survival of the fittest" has had an immense part to play in the spiritual progress of the world, although there comes a time when it ripens into the diviner law of the survival of the noblest, a variation which culminates in a difference in kind.

But there are other and higher inspirations in the city than the grim discipline of the contest. Here the soul expresses itself in the higher revelations of art. The Parthenon and St. Mark's, Angelo's dome, and Raphael's madonnas were inspired by the city and created for it; Shake-



spere, Beethoven, and Wagner, however nurtured; culminated in the city. Without the city their works would have been impossible; or, if possible, they would have died at birth. Architecture and painting, music and the drama, are but varying expressions of the human soul, man rising out of the realm of matter into the domain of spirit, man beginning where God left off, improving upon nature. He has already begun to build the holy city when he changes the tree into timber, the rock into the polished marble; when he makes perennial the perishable annuals of the field, or makes social the nation.

I have spoken of the country as the primary school. The city is the university of life, where the higher branches are studied and the harder problems grappled with. In the marsh we find the snail, the crayfish, and the bullfrog. In the stagnant human swamps of the city there are also human snails, carrying their shells upon their backs, making a house of their own incrustated thought. There are human crayfish there so fearful of the dangers of the advance that they always travel backward, and there are human bullfrogs, inflated and boastful, who think they discover in their own croaking a music sweet and winning.

Shall we commend the study of the lower specimens of the marsh, and find no profit in the study of the higher species of the same genera whose home is on the avenue?

Prize the birds as you please, their chatter in the boughs is not comparable with the chatter of the children in the park. Admire as we can and should the tree in the forest, we must recognize that even the tree reaches its ultimate beauty and utility in the cabinet-shop, under the dexterous hand and skilled eye of the artisan.

Aside from the inspiring challenge the city gives to the intellect, it is here that man enters into his full inheritance. The toils and triumphs of his fore-elders are now within his reach. In the city he walks the streets paved and lighted by the labor of his father and grandfather. In the library he finds the lore of the centuries. His Aryan forefathers hand down their words to him through the books that are here accessible to the poorest. The Parthenon is dead, but some trace of its fluted columns is found on the porch of the working-man, and there are hints of the cathedral, that majestic prayer in stone of the Middle Ages, in the pine-spired meeting-house

of the last Methodist schism. In the city the poorest may enjoy the architecture which the money of the wealthiest has made possible. In the city admirable copies of the works of the masters of the brush and chisel are within the reach of almost everybody, as they will be of quite everybody when that great city of the Apocalypse which is being builded on the earth is completed.

But however guarded my statement may be, and however open we may try to keep our minds, the very attempt to balance advantages, to force a debit and credit account between city and country is dangerous, and liable to do violence to the facts. No more surely are the city and country interdependent and interlocked in the economic interests of society than are they interdependent and interlocked in the life of every individual. That country boy or girl is rustic and undeveloped who has not seen something of the city's achievements and known something of its inspirations. Equally crude and imperfect is the development of the city boy or girl that contains no experiences acquired on the farm, in the woods, and in the field. A college graduate, male or female, that cannot

harness a horse and, if need be, milk a cow, is imperfectly educated.

Better than my discussion is the wisdom involved in this bit of wayside experience which came to me long ago, when, a solitary pedestrian, I threw myself down under a noble old oak on a country by-road, twelve miles from a railroad and probably more than "twelve miles from a lemon." As I slept, and read, and mused, one hour followed another, until either the anxiety or the curiosity at the neighboring farm-house, forty rods away, became too great to be endured. So the hired man—they were just through stacking—mounted a horse and rode over to see who I was, what I was doing, where I came from, and where I was going. Instead of resenting all this as an intrusion I was in a mood to meet the young man on his own ground, and he soon found that I could ask more questions than he could. Gradually we became confidential, and, with some half-ripe apples which he found in his pockets, we had a quiet communion-service under the tree. That awkward, half-formed, twenty-year-old, Irish farm-hand was more interesting than even the "Carlyle and Emerson Correspondence" which I carried

in my haversack and which constituted perhaps two pounds of my four-pound baggage.

Born in the neighborhood, left fatherless at the age of twelve, all the schooling he ever had was at the rickety schoolhouse "just back there a bit." He had taken the temperance pledge for seven years when fourteen years old. There was one year yet "before his time was up." He had not yet made up his mind whether he would renew, but he did not think he would ever drink very much, "although he felt kind o' lonesome like when he was with the b'ys, never to take nothing." His mother had brought him up to go to church, eight miles away, every Sunday, and the old priest used to teach him "a good bit." He learned from him a good deal about Columbus, Washington, and "sech like," besides what he had been taught about the Catholic religion. But when the old priest died, a young priest came from Chicago. He did not think the new priest knew much, and he "never cared to go to church much any more, except for his mother's sake." He was glad to know that I came from Chicago. He had a friend who lived there, a schoolmate. I asked him where his friend lived. "On Wabish Street."

"What is his name?" I asked. He replied, "She is a gerl, and her name is McGinnis." The tremor in the voice and the blush on the face told me that the boy wanted to give me his heart's deepest secret. He had not seen her for two and a half years. She did not need to work out; but she wanted to go to Chicago to learn "how to do things better than they were done in that neighborhood." She was coming home about Christmas; and when he was twenty-one, his mother was going to give him, the only child, his father's farm of eighty acres. He guessed that then probably they would get married. He himself had been working out for a year because the man he was working for was a good farmer, and he wanted to learn how to do some things.

The mellowness of this clumsy boy's heart, the strong but mute way in which his life was reaching upward toward something a little better than the life about him, and the tender confidence of these two simple hearts, — one fitting herself in a Wabash Avenue kitchen for matronly duties, the other trying to merit her superior culture by husbanding his forces in one of the most out-of-the-way nooks of Wisconsin, — seemed to

me to suggest depths of spiritual forces and disclose the subsoil strength of human nature. I may never know the sequel. It may have proved disappointing; but we have every reason to hope that that home, which combined the training of city and country, though attained in a way that classed the student of life in the city kitchen and on the country farm under the name of "help," raised the average of homemaking in that countryside. Presumably that eighty-acre farm is a better home for the experience which the good wife obtained on Wabash Avenue, and she stands higher in the community and is a better mother because she joined life's issues with the country "farm-hand" rather than with the city drayman.

Out of this complex life comes that spiritual sympathy which ought to reach from the pauper to the millionaire, from the pale slave of the sweat-shop to the restless heart of the imperious woman who spends miserable days amidst elegant surroundings, and beats her pillow in sleepless anguish over thwarted ambitions and dissipated energies. The city is a teacher of the humanities as the country never can be. It is in the city that the poor, beaten, bruised,

blistered horse most often needs a friend. It is in the city that the greatest solitude overtakes the human soul. There is no desert so dreary to the human heart as the social desert of the great city boarding-house, where no one knows and no one cares whence the stranger has come or whither he goes. The altruistic heart is drawn to the city as the mother is drawn to the crying child. It is our spiritual blindness, the undeveloped condition of our souls, that locates sublimity on the mountain-top only, and finds poetry in forest depths alone. There is sublimity there and poetry there, but there is more sublimity and more poetry where a human soul towers over the multitudes in the great city, rising into mountain-like majesty above its fellows. Had we fine discernment, such heights would move us with an awe greater than that inspired by the Andes or the Alps.

The highest mountain is situated somewhere in the chain of the Himalayas; but there is a sublimity that gathers around the head of that peasant prophet, walking the streets of Jerusalem, which no mountain in Asia equals. Yankee sagacity did well in naming the mountain peaks of New England after the great



Americans, — Washington, Adams, Webster, — but these men dwarf the mountains; and the hills are made to wear names that unfortunately suggest their insignificance and their inadequacy. Emerson sang of Monadnoc, that awoke within him “a thousand minstrels.” But the poet of the mountain is a sublimer fact than the mountain he interprets. Emerson is greater than his Monadnoc. He who can weigh, measure, and calculate the coming and the going of a star is greater than that star.

So whichever way we look, the city, however meagre, aye, the most wretched, beer-bedrugged town of the West, is a bigger fact, a greater study, a more inspiring presence to the spiritual man than any seaside or waterside. What would the ocean be to us were there not a Homer in the heart to recognize and interpret its restless billows? And that Homer in the heart is at home in the city. It is said that seven cities claim the nativity of the Homer of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Every city is the birthplace of this Homer of the human soul that clothes the mountain with meaning, invests the ocean with majesty, robs the storm of its terror. After all, the old blind poet of the Greeks strikes the central sanctity and suggests the highest inspiration

when he says, "For minstrels from all men on earth get their meed of honor and worship, inasmuch as the Muse teacheth them the path of song and loveth the tribe of minstrels."

But comparison here above all places is invidious. There is no real antagonism between country and town ; there ought to be no conflict of interests between field and city. All our artificial distinctions here break down. The city is the child of nature as much as the forest. Architecture is a department of natural science as much as geology and botany.

"Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,  
As the best gem upon her zone,  
And Morning opes with haste her lids  
To gaze upon the Pyramids;  
O'er England's abbeyes bend the sky,  
As on its friends, with kindred eye;  
For out of Thought's interior sphere  
These wonders rose to upper air;  
And Nature gladly gave them place,  
Adopted them into her race,  
And granted them an equal date  
With Andes and with Ararat."

The lines of country and city are interchangeable. Nature is in the city, not alone in the park,

but also in the alleys. She has her scavengers at work ununiformed by the Civic Federation, more skilful and diligent than its employees. In the "mud and scum" of the city as of the country,

"There alway, alway something sings";

and so in the country the city is always present. There life has its struggles. Human tasks are there ameliorated by invention, toil is relieved by art, and solitude dissipated by letters and the papers that put the farmer in daily touch with Bombay and London. Both country and city conspire to bring their contributions to the spiritual life.

The situation is a hopeful one. The chasm is being narrowed, artificial lines are being borne down. The distinctions between city and country are fading. The rustic wears urban clothes and greets you with urban manners. The citizen is no longer necessarily a resident of the city, as the word implies. On the other hand, more and more, let us pray, may the dweller of the city find the simple heart, the unpretentious mind, the uncalculating soul, such as I tried to show at the outset is the gift of the country to him who enters into its higher ministrations.

Job was right when he said, "Speak to the earth and it will teach thee." But John was also true when he predicted that the final triumph would come in an ordered city "in the light of which the nations will walk" and to which "the kings of the earth will bring their glory." John saw it *descending* from heaven. Perhaps we in the spirit of science would prefer to see it *ascending* out of the earth, rising out of the past; but in either case it is a city to be on the earth, a city whose gates are angel-guarded, a city into which "There shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither anything whatsoever that worketh abomination or maketh a lie." Such a city it is our privilege to build. Such a city we already have in embryo here on the shores of Lake Michigan. We are the artisans called to build a shining city of justice, the home of righteousness. Already jasper and crystal, sapphire and chalcedony, emerald and sardonyx, chrysolite and beryl, topaz, jacinth, and amethyst embellish our city more profusely perhaps than even the vision of John conceived. It only waits a consecration of spirit, a dedication of heart, a perfection of life, to make of Chicago the "holy city, a new Jerusalem in the light of which the nations will walk,"

a city the gates of which "shall not be shut at all by day for there shall be no night there." To the completion of this new Jerusalem on the shores of Lake Michigan we are called. It takes the imagination of man, the winged powers of the soul, to read the lesson of earth. It needs more of this winged power to find the parallel lessons of encouragement and inspiration in the city, and only those who have mastered the multiplication table of the country can successfully grapple with the algebra of the city. Many there are who face with courage the threatening gloom of the country, but abandon the high problems of the city and shrink into the mean dimensions of selfish pursuit under the cowardly apology, "There is no use. The forces of evil are too much for us."

Happily, love's lines cannot be permanently broken. There is an apostolic succession that passes along the gospel word and the gospel life from generation to generation, from century to century. The Holy Ghost continues its ministrations, not only through the lines of surpliced bishops, but through the humbler lines of good women and true men, and the still more lowly lines of the humble animals. I look back across

my army experiences into the farmyard of my boyhood, and recall with pleasure the horses I have petted and who have reciprocated my love with faithful service and high demeanor. All along the way there is an apostolic succession in horses. My Jess left me, but she left behind her a love for and a need of her kind in the heart, and for me this place was filled by the same providence that brought Jess. And so the year after her going I went to my summer home again as a solitary horseman.

Now it was with my stronger, more sedate, but ever competent and ever faithful Roos. Without jealousy or envy she took the smaller place in my heart, and gratefully accepted and promptly responded to the caresses which were given to her with another in mind. Let no one, knowing the story of Jess, resent the appearance of her successor, this goodly bay mare. Let no one taunt her with inferiority or me with infidelity. Rather have we both honored Jess by showing that she not only made a better and a tenderer place for all horses, but made her own place so large that love must needs fill it with further comradeship between man and horse. Should any one be unkind enough to institute

an invidious comparison between the stately Roos and the dainty Jess, or breathe a reproach for her failure to reach the high goal which Jess attained, let some justice-loving Joris cry in vindication of her, as he did for her whose name she bears,

“Stay spur !

Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her.”

This time it was that Roos and I picked our way by farms and through hamlets, through two hundred miles of sunshine and shadow, to our common pleasure-grounds on the Wisconsin River. On our last day out in this journey, the growing heat led us to take a twenty-mile jaunt in the dark of the early morning, that we might escape the heat of the day. At two o'clock on a memorable Sunday morning, we were on the road while all the world was asleep. Even the birds were in dreamland, and the leaves were still. There was a double depth to the sky, and the stars seemed to nod and blink. In this stillness that was almost preternatural, the sky became o'er-cast, ghostly shadows came slowly up out of the west. The naval squadrons of the sky wheeled into action, and distant flashes of light indicated

that the engagement was already on, beyond the far horizon-line. The great men-of-war bore down upon the solitary horse and rider. The rumble of their cannonading was heard. The crack of their heavier ordnance became startling. A thrill of apprehension quivered through the horse and smote the rider. One gallant frigate, full-rigged and ominous, bore down with impetuous speed upon us. Its bowsprit pierced the moon and split it, its black hull ran it down and obliterated it, and pitchy darkness was o'er all the earth. There was no shelter at hand, or if there was, we knew not how to reach it. Roos, with cautious step and vigilant ear, slackened her willing pace and groped. We stopped and waited. The world seemed on the eve of obliteration, but soon the cloudy squadron sailed over us and did not crush us. The keels of those phantom ships flashed with electricity above our heads, and still left us unscathed and unscorched. Slowly in the wake of the storm the stars appeared one by one, and lo! the shattered moon was there in its completeness. The air was cooler. Dawn, "the rosy-fingered," met the shadows of the sky-fleet and scattered them, and the birds began to twitter.



The cocks crowed in the barnyard. The dogs barked their welcome. The cow-bells began to tinkle, and drowsy farm men and women came out to milk. The storm was gone. Day had come. The world was moving on, and the memorable ride ended in a welcome breakfast for horse and rider.

More than once have we encountered such a spectacle as this in the social and civic life of this great city of Chicago. Once what seemed a destructive armada from heaven bore down upon our city and it was engulfed in what seemed to be the destructive gloom of anarchy. Every star went out, the moon was pierced, and there was no sun. Riot, bloodshed, and the ghastly gallows fruit followed. Then the fleet bore by, and we found that it was only a cloud, and that it had cleared the atmosphere. The moon was in its old place, not a star blotted out. The sun came as of old. After terror came indignation, after indignation regret, out of regret pity, and to-day we are ashamed of our faithless mood, we regret our anger, and wish that our anarchists, more deluded than criminal, were still alive with us in the light of day.

Again came the convulsions of the great strike.

Wrongs ripened into desperation, and desperation into mistakes, to be followed by other wrongs. But that storm passed by, and the birds began to sing again. Then came a financial o'ercast. Men became panic-stricken because a few banks had broken. Reason almost deserted its throne. Conscience quite lost its bearings simply because the "times were hard," and things seemed to be going to the bad. Perhaps they seem so still to some; but let us take to heart that Sunday morning sermon of the cloud-storm and remember that the cloud, however borne along by the tempest, is but a cloud, and must abide the limitations of a cloud. It cannot permanently obscure the sun. The splitting of the moon and the blotting of the stars are only seeming. They remain; the clouds pass.

Thus it is that over country and city one economy obtains. Spirit and matter are conditioned by kindred laws, and we can count with equal certainty upon the stability of the right and the transitory quality of the wrong. For life must "on and upward go." It is for us to construct a celestial superstructure on terrestrial foundations, making our earthly city so clean, wholesome, temperate, beautiful, that it

will indeed be a "new Jerusalem, the city of God, the light of the nations."

"Thy people shall build the ancient desolations,  
The ruins of many generations shall they restore ;  
Thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach,  
The restorer of ways for inhabitants."



THE RELIGION OF THE  
BIRD'S NEST

There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast, —  
The desert and illimitable air, —  
Lone wandering, but not lost.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven  
Hath swallowed up thy form ; yet on my heart  
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone  
Will lead my steps aright.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

## THE RELIGION OF THE BIRD'S NEST

In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever.

HOSEA ii. 18, 19.

A GOOD field-glass is a double-barrelled gun that brings down the birds without injuring them. It enables one to count their marks and note their motion and still leave them free. It helps one to note color, form, and action, to delight in the delicate markings, the quaint outlines, the subtle personality of the many birds that flit through the boughs. The first service of the field-glass is to heighten what we superficially call the poetry of nature. The bird seems through the glass to be not only the freest, but the happiest, of Nature's children, with superabundant life flowing and overflowing from dawn to dark; and when the glass refuses to serve, the ear testifies that

there is no cessation, but still the stream of life continues from dark to dawn. On Tower Hill, hot weather or cold, wet weather or dry, there is always a bird in sight, and in the main he seems triumphant and happy.

The next service of the glass is to intensify the artistic element in nature. It was in bird-realm that Darwin found his highest warrant for the daring generalization expressed in the words, "There is a tendency in Nature to ornamentation." How varied, how brilliant, how delicate, how subdued and subordinated one to the other, are the colors of the bird. How curious is the blending of bird-colors all the way from the dainty bronze of the humming-bird to the aggressive blue of the jay. From the charming dun of the brown thrasher to the proud banner of the red-headed woodpecker, everything is beautiful, and the more the ear is attuned to bird notes, the more searching seems the melody. Whatever it means, and however elusive it may be, it leaves upon the human ear an impression of buoyancy. From the military long-roll of the woodpecker to the confident and continuous interrogations of the red-eyed vireo, the preacher-bird, with his "Do-you-see-it?" "Do-you-



know-it?" "Do-you-believe-it?" "Do-you-believe-it?" there is an optimistic accent. The harsh screech of the blue-jay as well as the scarey "Tu-who-oo" of the midnight owl, bespeaks a dominant world of life. Even the most pensive call of the birds, from the pleading note of the obscure pewee up to the plaintive call of the whip-poor-will, is pathos without a suggestion of torture, emotion without agony, feeling without violence. The saddest songs are sweet songs.

Perhaps the glass, unaided by reflection born of study, would carry us no farther than this in our search for a spiritual lesson from the birds. In all times they have stood for the religion of joy and beauty. They have represented the gospel of freedom and melody. The psalmist noted with delight that "the swallow has found a nest 'neath the altars of the Most High," and Shelley aspired to the ecstasy of the skylark when he sang,

"Teach me half the gladness  
That thy brain must know,  
Such harmonious madness  
From my lips would flow  
The world should listen then, as I am listening now."

It is often well for us to take the poet's short cut, and delight in the final triumph without tak-

ing thought of the long struggle that preceded it, rejoicing in the fact without counting the cost thereof. It is well at times to trust in the faith of the old prophet and believe that God has made a covenant with the fowls of the air and with the creeping things of the ground; that he has betrothed himself to them and to us forever.

But I would like to bring a profounder lesson out of the bird-realm than this. All the beauty, harmony, and apparent freedom are misleading and unreal until we go beneath and behind the blithe song and the exquisite plumage.

Before I arrived at Westhope cottage, early in July, a pair of mourning doves had already taken possession of a well-hooded nook under the cornice just over the porch. It must have seemed to this demure pair of home-seekers an ideal spot for a homestead. "Here," said the shy birds, "is a hidden nook in a silent place where the intruding enemy in feathers or furs will not find us out." The wire netting, stretched to receive the climbing ivy, must have seemed to them a rare and unique provision, a natural platform created for the crate of twigs in which, in due time, they might cradle their young. The wire must have seemed all the more providential

because, if the truth must be told, these doves, so dainty of step, so prim in costume, like some other bipeds who walk abroad, similarly plumed, are poor home-makers and untidy housekeepers.

You can imagine the surprise and disappointment of these birds, who so love the solitude and are so shy of men, at finding one morning an unfriendly, terrible man walking the porch upon which they had entered a claim. He was to them a rude intruder upon their preemption, an unwarranted menace, an unwelcome poacher on their premises. Their surprise and disappointment, nay, their unquestioned alarm, were matched by my delight; and so at once there settled down upon the bird and man occupants of that cottage in the woods a mutual restraint. We were both possessed of a fear which haunted us more or less for nearly six weeks. I was afraid they would go; they were afraid I would stay. They summoned up all their courage, determined to bear to the utmost the threatened danger rather than abandon the domestic altar and sacrifice the new life within the shell. I determined to forbear so far as possible the intruding step, the thoughtless noise, the threatening presence. It was a curious play

of emotions between the pigeons and this member of the *genus homo*, between whom physical nature had established an antagonism. Physically speaking, I was the natural enemy, and still I was as anxious to bestow as they were to escape my attentions. It was a slow, painful, care-taking process, this establishing of an understanding between man and the wild doves on their nest. No youth ever proceeded to woo a coy maiden with more care, more anxious excitement, or more uncertainty as to the result, than did I to woo the confidence of my doves.

Fortunately, in the earlier weeks I was the solitary occupant of the cottage; and the larger section of the northwest corner of the porch was ceded to the dove tenants. My voice was modulated, my coming and going softened; but sometimes I would forget, and a snatch of song, which must have been a rasping discord to the mother ear, would strain her nerves beyond endurance, the whistling wings would remind me too late of my rudeness, and the bird would be gone. Then there was Sambo, the dog, to quiet; there were curious little boys in the neighborhood to be kept down; and inquisitive

visitors who would persist in failing to see without getting close enough to scare the occupant, and then the bird would have to fly. Sometimes my visitors would wear their welcome out, for the anxious bird on the bough and the anxious proprietor on the porch knew that every moment they stayed lowered the temperature of the exposed eggs, thereby perilling life, the divine mystery of being that was being called out of chaos into cosmos within the marble walls of the two bird-eggs.

Gradually our relations became better adjusted, the sanctities of the porch were better recognized and more sacredly observed, the confidences of the nest grew stronger, and the brilliant, black, beady eyes looked on with less fear and more curiosity. Talking and reading, work and lessons, went on within ten or twelve feet of the place where these shy denizens of shady nooks were playing their part in the mysterious drama of life, and still they persisted in their strangely beautiful domesticity.

Toward the last, I, who had carried wild dismay and precipitated hasty retreat at a distance of sixteen feet, was permitted to approach within a yard, and the situation could be studied eye to eye

unflinchingly. Day after day I watched the domestic drama of human life written small within the crude nest of twigs. There was always the faithful sharing of responsibility. Each morning with a murmuring "Coo-oo-oo," the father bird would come and exchange responsibilities with the mother bird, sitting with feminine grace upon egg and birdling, bearing in his turn with masculine pride his portion of the supplies. The naked, ungainly little ones gradually took upon themselves feathers, form, and vitality, and at last there came a morning when the responsibilities of life began to be felt. Fear of something a little more terrible than the ordinary made the stronger of the birdlings bold to venture, and with a sudden leap he made the plunge. The untried wings worked, the body found itself sustained in air, and with a graceful slant from the roof of the cottage toward the bottom of the hill, he landed ten rods away. The new life had begun. For two days the family cares were divided between the more stalwart birdling already in the thicket and the weaker one, who did not dare trust himself away from the sheltered nest; but the third day he, too, was gone. A home built in confidence, sustained in fear,

had reached its triumph. A new creative impulse had come to fruition, and two more doves were out in the world. A new peace had come into the hearts of parent birds. And the landlord, whose rights had never been recognized by the bird tenants, was left with a thoughtfulness which perchance might ripen into a sermon.

I have already spoken of the more apparent lessons of bird life. Let me now try to count two or three of the less obvious lessons which have a profound significance, and which, if realized, cause the facts already mentioned to cease to be superficial and become cubical; or, better still, spherical.

First, what of the fear which is the almost universal attendant of bird life? That foolish little pigeon sat there day after day with her heart in her mouth in fear of a friend. On a hill that is friendly to birds, where the gun is not allowed and the bird song is welcome music, these birds trembled, were eternally vigilant, alert to every noise, startled by the crackling twigs, fearful of chirp and whistle. Foolish bird, we say; but in saying it we demonstrate our own foolishness, for a little scientific knowledge shows that the timidity of the bird is most pathetically

justified by sad experiences. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" is a maxim immeasurably more true in the kingdom of birds than in the kingdom of man, for the bird is literally harassed by foes from within and without. The number of its enemies, the nature of its dangers, the ever-threatening army that surrounds it, present to the thoughtful such a grim array of dangers as makes the little life seem tragic. All this puts tears into the most cheerful song and blood-stains upon the most delicately shaded wing. Darwin's phrase, "the struggle for existence," receives its highest illustration in the realm of bird life. For a million years, more or less, the birds have been under fire. They have had to live beset by foes. The enemy has been before and behind. In every one of these million years hundreds and thousands of birds have gone down in the battle. So sharp is the struggle, so desperate the contest, that one wayward tint upon the wing thus made too conspicuous reveals the bird to some relentless enemy. A few lines short in the length of the pinion feathers yields it up to the pursuing enemy; if the bill is too long or the claw too short, down goes the bird. My glass brought out the marvellous symmetry of



the dove, so rounded and delicately moulded. How modest and well-chosen was the Quaker-like garb, how quaint the little black marking on the side of the head.

It is a grim reflection that that quiet color has been brought about by the awful selections of nature; the more glaring tints, the less obscuring variations have fallen out by the way, have gone down the road of death. Why do the doves always light on the dead branches? Why do they sit so statuesque and still? Because nature, through severe discipline, has taught them that safety lies in the inconspicuous position and attitude, or, to put it in its grimmest form, nature has killed off all those not protected by such mimicry. The mournful call that fell upon my ear was the love-note of the loyal husband, who, by a marvellous ventriloquism, threw the sound of his "Coo-oo-oo" out into space so that that which was uttered within a few feet from my ears seemed to come from some indefinite place rods away. This again was a hard-bought deception wrought out of bitter experience, a high trick taught by nature to the bird that would survive; not that the birds change their notes, but that the wayward note,

like flaring colors, brings death, and the indefinite sound, like the undecided color, brings safety. There are more bird calls than bird songs, and the "calls" are most often warning notes, signals of danger, the halloos of comrades when the ranks are broken, or the reassuring whistle which one wayfarer gives to another as they travel in the dark.

One day on the front porch, fifteen feet above the ground, wriggling through the ivy along the trellis-work, I saw a "blue racer," three and a half feet long, climbing up toward our doves' nest, doubtless after the eggs there deposited. Had the dreaded "landlord" not interfered, these mourning doves would have remained childless, notwithstanding their courage. Eden would have again been invaded by a snake, and my bird Adam and Eve would have been homeless.

On our back porch, over the door, I found on my arrival what seemed to be a happy family of Phebe birds, the young being well under way. These peasant birds, with drab coats and ashen vests, high shoulders and somewhat unkempt heads, were as exquisite in their home-making as the doves were slovenly. They had an ideal cottage nest of compacted mud lined with softest

down. The nest was well sheltered from the weather, and all signs indicated prosperity. The Phebe bird is much reconciled to humanity. It is willing to go shares with man and anxious to enjoy the fruits of civilization. Insect life was abundant, father and mother bird were diligent. Five hungry birdlings with capacious mouths kept them busy from daylight to dark. But one morning I discovered the five little birdlings dead, a wholesale tragedy of the nest. This thrifty family had been the victims of the merciless parasites which the books tell us cloud the life of this diligent peasant bird from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Everywhere it is beset with a persistent, parasitic insect which oftentimes renders the nest uninhabitable and compels the parents to build anew. These little white lice were too numerous to count, and the scene of the tragedy had to be flooded with the hose in order to rid the porch of the presence of the 'pest. The snake and parasites suggest the bird foes innumerable which were in the world before man came, and which pursue their game independently of man and in spite of man's protection.

Think again of the awful battle our birds fight with the climate, and their magnificent

triumph over nature's inhospitality, as represented by bird migrations. The mourning doves that in July feed their young in Wisconsin will probably spend their winter in Mexico. Some of their neighbors will cross over to Cuba, while the snipe and plover that we saw fishing along the banks of the Wisconsin in August had hatched their young within the Arctic circle in May and June, and by December they may be fishing along the coasts of Patagonia. Thus twice a year the great feathered columns move, first southward and then northward. The beautiful Baltimore oriole in his bright scarlet coat left the pretty nest, which we used for decorating our "Emerson pavilion" on Tower Hill, and is now in more modest yellow on his way to Central America. If nothing befalls him he will be back next spring to greet us again. But many will fall out by the way. Many will literally lose their way when, affrighted by the noise of the storm or blown by the violence of the wind out of hearing of the company's call, they miss the bugle notes of the leader. There is method in the flitting of the silliest of the birds in their migratory days. The timid and weak of wing seek the shelter of the woods, lie low during the

daytime when their enemies are abroad, and do their travelling by night. When fogs are heavy and storms obscure the sky, they fly low; in clear nights they rise higher. It is impossible to realize the extent of these migrations. Countless are these obedient children of nature, fleeing from its forces that they may themselves become its exponents. Chapman, in his "Bird Life," relates that on the night of September 3, 1887, he and a friend in New Jersey counted no less than two hundred and sixty-two birds between the hours of eight and eleven in the evening, flying across the angle of vision of a six-and-a-half-inch equatorial telescope. This habit of being borne southward on the crest of the winter storm, it is presumed by scientists, was first taught the birds by the severities of the glacial experiences. But, oh, the cost of this migration! After one night of storm in the height of the migratory season fourteen hundred birds were picked up at the base of the Bartholdi statue in New York harbor. In the terror of that midnight storm the poor birds had fled toward the light and beaten themselves to death against the delusive glass that seemed to promise succor.

In the face of this, what have we to say of

that New Testament providence of which it is said that not a sparrow falls without the Father's notice? It is providence still, but providence with an aim further along. It is not providence fitting itself to the needs of the sparrow, but the sparrow painfully fitting itself to the great order of providence. This new reading of the old text may well represent the new version of the old gospel. Here is the pith of the lesson I bring from the bird's nest on the porch. The old theology sought to reconcile God to man. The new theology seeks to reconcile man to God, to fit his life into the complexities of the universe in such a way that he may become a part of the divine order, himself an embodiment of that infinite law which is friendly to the excellent, and hospitable to the competent. In the great process of man's reconciliation to the ways of God, man fitting himself into the universe, the law of sacrifice is made still more manifest. Here is the sacrifice, not of the most competent, but of the most incompetent. Not the sacrifice of one faultless child of the infinite, but the sacrifice of countless imperfect products of the finite must pay the penalty and pave the way for that redemption which makes for prog-

ress and the eternal life. I have told how my glass revealed the ever buoyant life of the bird, as with restless wing and claw he scaled the tree-trunks, flitted among the leaves, hopped upon the ground, apparently in wanton joy ; but a closer investigation and a more sympathetic science showed that the inspiration lay in the hungry stomach, the voracity of the bird in search of food for himself and his young ones. One thousand and twenty-one eggs of the canker-worm have been counted in the stomach of a chickadee at one time. Professor Forbes, the state entomologist of Illinois, has published startling figures to show that the weakest of the birds must work from morning till night to secure food enough for himself and his young ones, and that in securing it he rids our orchards of their insect pests and makes our gardens possible. Even the slow-going owl, Mr. Chapman estimates, devours at least a thousand field-mice a year, producing a minimum profit to the farmer of at least twenty dollars per owl.

Let us hold on to the providence of the bird, "hard, cruel, relentless providence" though it may seem. For, after all, it is the providence that perfects bird life, that develops the song of

the whip-poor-will and the holy anthem of the hermit-thrush, that fills our fields with buoyant life, that makes radiant the hillslope with color, the providence that puts life on its mettle and makes it rise to the best or get out of the way. This providence of the bird we see beginning away back and away down below with the lower animal life, simple, clumsy, grotesque, and we see it squeezing, crowding, pinching, propelling, alluring, at last inspiring life into its myriad forms of glory and of ecstasy, each stage differing from the other and each more glorious than the last, each marking an advance upon the highway of being. In the bird the story of evolution becomes lyric. Bird life begins in the cold-blooded life of the quadruped away down in the Jurassic rocks. In the Bavarian quarries there was found the fossil of a reptile-like bird with teeth in its jaws, wings too weak for flight, and feathers strung along a tail-like extension of the vertebræ. Up from that connecting link we may pass into the almost endless variety of bird life as we find it to-day. Aristotle, in the third century B.C., counted in his *Natural History* some one hundred and seventy different kinds of birds. The latest textbook tells us that upward of thirteen thousand



species are known to science, and these reach from the humming-bird to the eagle; from the frigate-bird, that can cross the ocean on its wings and live for weeks in the air, to the penguin that has been called the feathered porpoise; from the ostrich, that can outspeed a horse and race across a desert, to the robin, whose only walk is a hop. Our mourning dove represents one of three hundred known species of pigeons, only twelve of which are fitted into North American life. This family of the Columbidae has been divided and subdivided, which means that the dove has been adjusted and readjusted to its surroundings. Some live among the trees, others are ground birds. Some are wont to establish great bird cities in the forests, others fly alone in the hedges. All of them would seem to be on the advance line of the feathered kingdom in many respects. They alone can drink without raising their bills to swallow. They alone among birds verge on the line of mammals, for they feed their young with "pigeon-milk," the partially digested food regurgitated out of the stomach. This we saw on Westhope porch, — the two birdlings with their bills deep set into the mother's bill, receiving their food from the stomach of the parent bird.

I have but crudely hinted at the providence of the bird's nest, but the sooner we accept this interpretation revealed in providence for man, the more religious we shall become. The ultimate purpose of God is life, — more abundant, varied, exultant, triumphant life. The universe will not cosset dove or man. Sparrow and hero are worth to God just what they are worth to truth and beauty, reality and right, and that only. Man is conserved as the dove is, in so far as he conforms to the definite behests of the universe. The inadequate birds, ill-adjusted to time and place, weak of wing where strong wing was necessary, short of bill where the food was to be obtained by deep probing, have fallen out by the way. They have been destroyed, not by a cruel, but by a benignant providence. They have been used as rounds in the ladder of life. They have lived their lives not in vain; rather have they served life grandly in their failures. Out of this grim struggle for existence finally comes the gospel of trust and faith.

Do you say this religion of the bird's nest is harsh, hard, unpitying, uninspiring? The contrary is true. The turtle-dove from time immemorial has been a synonym of love. Her

song has been caught up by the human heart and rendered into the sweetness of human affections. According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the oldest picture now in the possession of man is an old Egyptian fresco of birds, dating back three thousand years before Christ. Shakespeare has six hundred allusions to birds. Take the bird out of English literature, and it is like taking flowers out of the landscape. The Bible is musical with bird notes. Shaler, in his work on "Domestication of Animals," states that the breeding of pigeons was begun in India over two thousand years ago; that man has labored for a thousand years to gratify his fancy in the development of pigeon varieties. Darwin, in his great work, draws some of his most ingenious arguments from the work of the pigeon-fancier, who has developed hundreds of varieties and peculiarities from the original rock-pigeon. But nature began her work long before man began his. The whole pigeon family are monogamic for life. The pigeon-fancier can count as completely on the father as on the mother of his birds. The young bird is hatched as helpless as the human infant, and requires the care of both parents to bring it to maturity. What does all

this mean if not that the crush and grind of life is toward tenderness ; that love is not the airy effervescence of human sentiment, but that it is the very wine of nature slowly expressed by the press of life? The "grind of fate" is our unphilosophic phrase for the growing revelations of love. The creative God gives the parable of human life in the bird's nest, and shows that indolence and selfishness, insincerity and artificiality are doomed. The eternal decree of the Almighty is against them ; while, on the other hand, patience, diligence, loyalty, and love are not only sanctioned but created by the travail of nature and the unfolding of life.

Somewhere in the religion of the bird's nest enters a human element. Man enters for a time, and interferes, blunders, defeats, thwarts ; but even man must learn, as the dove has learned, that no providence fits his mistakes, no providence will correct his blunders, and no providence will save him from his own imperfections, but that he must fit into providence ; he must make common cause with nature ; discover the way of life, and walk therein. Then, and not till then, will he partake of the ecstasy of the bird and sing his song ; then he will know the

faith of the bird who sits patient and unquestioning weeks upon the egg until life comes forth more abundantly.

Man's intrusion is painfully discoverable in the story of the dove. The pigeon, that once flew in great flocks and settled in mighty colonies, is almost an extinct bird. Wilson, in 1808, estimated that there were over two billion pigeons in a flock which he observed near Frankfort, Kentucky. The last pigeon "nesting" in Michigan on a large scale was in 1881. It covered a strip of country some eight miles long, while four years before that there was a "nesting" that covered a territory twenty-eight miles long, averaging three or four miles in width. Now the pigeon has become so rare that Chapman says he has seen but one pair in the Atlantic states for sixteen years. These birds have vanished under the hunting and snaring hand of intrusive man. Our mourning dove remains to preach us our sermon because of its solitary habits.

But there comes a time in the development of man when he makes friends with the dove and becomes neighborly to the pigeon. Then it is that "nature, red in tooth and claw" on the

lower levels, blooms into love, bursts into a co-operation that crosses the distinctions of species and coördinates all the forces of life, bringing them into that higher harmony which will make this life beautiful, this earth a heaven, and all nature ethical.

I come from the hillsides of Wisconsin with the music of the birds in my ears, with a sense of the struggle in nature resting upon my heart, and with a renewed conviction that there is no religion that is not rational, that there is no lasting piety which does not rest upon the great affirmations of nature, and that the ultimate faith of man must rest in the great truths of science. The only religion that is dead or dying is the arbitrary religion of miracle, of "chosen" peoples, of special sanctities. In other words, the great negations that are paralyzing the religious world to-day are those which deny the unity of nature, the community of races, the integrity of history, in the interest of some special scheme, some partial redemption, some theological test-line, some sectarian success. He deals in negations who refuses to listen to the growing revelations of science. That church is negative that refuses to profit by the experience of the race, and halts

along the highway over which travel human thought and human love.

I have been up under the trees. I have again been watching the river. I have ridden through hundreds of miles of country roads, and nowhere in nature have I found a line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. I have found no place to lay the foundation of a denominational church, and no landmarks by which to survey the boundary-line between sect and sect, creed and creed. Nowhere have I seen any indication that the God of the stars, of the sun and the moon, is partial to Methodist statistics, Presbyterian respectability and wealth, Episcopalian style, or Unitarian boast of culture. There is more reality in the "Tu-who-oo" of the owl than in the purse-proud boast of preacher and layman who point to their great churches, munificent salaries, crowded audiences, or accumulated fortunes as evidence of the divine sanction, or as an argument for the true faith. In the eye of the All-seeing one the pathetic failures of the Phebe bird have more spiritual potency and ethical significance than the strident boasts of the "successful" cat-bird, though he be the most orthodox of birds. His conspicuous blue marks him afar as a confident

Calvinist, whose "election" and "calling" are sure. He is certain that he is God's accepted bird. Let us have done with arbitrary distinctions. Let us apply ourselves to the slow, hard tasks of God, the tasks of character-building. We must begin where the bird leaves off, and take the battle from the physical to the spiritual realm. It is for us to bear the banners forward so that God's creative line will no longer be where lie contending physical forms and material organs, but where the moulds of ideas, spiritual instrumentalities, social organisms, are being developed. On these lines we may work here as there with that Power that has "covenanted with the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven." We may take up the battle where the creeping things have laid it down, realizing in the splendid phrase of the old Bible that we, like them, are "betrothed unto this mighty Power forever."



NEAR TO THE HEART OF  
NATURE

## EACH IN HIS OWN TONGUE

A fire-mist and a planet,  
A crystal and a cell, —  
A jelly-fish and a saurian,  
And caves where the cave men dwell;  
Then a sense of law and beauty  
And a face turned from the clod, —  
Some call it Evolution,  
And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon, —  
The infinite, tender sky, —  
The ripe, rich tint of the corn-fields,  
And the wild geese sailing high, —  
And all over upland and lowland  
The charm of the golden-rod, —  
Some of us call it Autumn,  
And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach  
When the moon is new and thin,  
Into our hearts high yearnings  
Come welling and surging in, —  
Come from the mystic ocean,  
Whose rim no foot has trod, —  
Some of us call it longing,  
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty, —  
A mother starved for her brood, —  
Socrates drinking the hemlock,  
And Jesus on the rood ;  
And millions who, humble and nameless,  
The straight, hard pathway trod, —  
Some call it consecration,  
And others call it God.

WILLIAM HERBERT CARRUTH.

## NEAR TO THE HEART OF NATURE

A STRIKING transition is that from the solitude of the riverside to the crush of the street. Tower Hill in its quiet isolation is far removed from Chicago in its strain and its hurry. The whole diameter of human life would seem to separate the solitude of the one from the society of the other. The haunts of the whip-poor-will, the home of the blue-jay and the tree-toad are far removed from the City Hall, the Board of Trade and the Public Library. There would seem to be nothing but antagonism between the life which rises to its maximum hilarity and activity under the electric light that makes night more attractive than day, and the life that in the main does not need the help of a lantern to see it to bed.

The common way of characterizing this distance is to call one nature and the other human nature. On Tower Hill it was "things." In Chicago it is "folks." For the time being I admit this distinction. I will accept for the present the poet's

phrase, "near to the heart of nature," and try to report a few lessons from the woods, this trysting-place for lovers, this enchanted land for artists, this paradise for overstrained brain and weary nerve.

Four or five hundred miles on horseback, for the most part solitary riding; sixty miles in a skiff down the broad Wisconsin; two months' occupancy of a room on a hillslope which permitted me, like a bird on its nest, to sleep and wake with the far horizon-line before the eye; a bewitching picture of hill and valley, wood and field; water enough to mimic the sky above, to carry constellations in its bosom at night, to give back the sun by day, awaiting each awakening; all these ought to leave some impressions worth reporting.

The first help I found "near to the heart of nature" was the sedative that allays the spiritual fever of our time and city. Nature, on the surface at least, is dispassionate. It is very deliberate. Even in the intense temperature of the hottest days, nature endures without scolding. The leaves droop, the grass-blades wilt, the birds keep still; but there is no petulant complaint about it. And the same is true of the other extreme. For

the most part the realms of plant and animal life take the chills of winter stoically. The exhausted leaf floats gently to its death. The birds, admonished by the early frost, one by one steal quietly away and keep ahead of the snow-line in their southern march, while those that remain tuck themselves up in their winter resolutions, which are perhaps better protection than the feathers encircling the fluffy ball of life. It remains for man to fret and scold ; it remains, probably, for man to discover the rebellious accomplishment of suicide. Tears are well-nigh a human product. The bark of a dog, scientists tell us, is the result of domestication. Even the civilized dog loses his power of barking, forgets his vociferous power of protest, after about thirty years of solitude. To be "near to the heart of nature" is to be far away from the friction, the contentions, the poisoning jealousies of life. The cultivated mind feels deeper than it can reason, and it is hard to analyze the charm of the country ; but perhaps one large element lies in the peace which seems to brood over field and forest, in the stability of elm and oak, in the patience of the pine. The wild rose has but a single whorl of petals, but it is fragrant notwithstanding. It does not grow pale with

jealousy because it cannot emulate the queen of the garden in her many and vari-colored robes. It goes on shedding its fragrance on desert air as contentedly as though its blushes were seen in a city park.

But the deliberation of nature is balanced by its diligence; by that persistency that is never balked or discouraged, but pushes toward some far-off unknown goal with energy unfaltering. The hills work on long lines. The achievements of the marsh are the results of investments far back, and their worth will be determined only in the perspective of the long eras of time to come. Tower Hill, on the side of which Westhope cottage is built, owes its name to what was once a proud industry. Away back in the thirties, Yankee energy and eastern capital established what was for the time and place a great enterprise. They bored the hill, and into the shaft, two hundred feet deep, they dropped the molten lead, thereby changing it to shot. Westhope looks out upon the site of a deserted village; wharves, warehouses, shops, stores, hotels, pioneer homes, all are gone; but the old river keeps on her course. The pines that were saplings in the way of the territorial enterprise have persisted, and

now their high heads bow patiently before the storm.

So is it everywhere. The fable of the tortoise and the hare is entirely inadequate to represent the methods of nature. The tortoise is too swift, his goal is too easy to reach. He is not a fitting symbol of that nature which holds the "unhasting and unresting stars," as Goethe calls them, apparently in the same field they occupied when the far-off shepherds of India first tried to count them, learned their location, and gave them names. The fern in the mossy glen may call forth the adjectives "dainty," "delicate," "exquisite," but the glen itself, with its depth of leafy mould, its sculptured water-ways, its sand battlements on either side, awakens emotions which require, not the terms of art, but the terms of religion, to express, for it suggests unmeasured cycles of time, unwearied forces of wind and water, frost and tide, which dwarf the greatest achievements of armies and reduce human chronology to the passing sunshine and shadow of a day. The clay that clings to the wagon-wheel is battered granite, the sand that checks and tricks the river in its search for the sea is crushed quartz, and nature had no mills with which to



grind the one or crush the other save the persistent teasing of the wind, the tireless insinuations of the raindrops, and the invisible chisel of the frost. Realizing this, there is in the mud-puddle and the sand-bar a grandeur which the Alleghenies and the Rockies emphasize only by the law of accumulation, not by the law of difference. It is only a question of degree.

It was easy to grow sentimental over nature as we floated along on the quiet bosom of the sunlit river, looking from that low level out to the well-moulded hills, over which embroidered rugs of waving tree-tops were flung, and finding new decorative beauty in the sedges along the banks. The music of the lute fitted into the song of nature as we noted the graceful swing of the willows and became familiar with the long-legged cranes quietly pursuing their fishing industries, wading through the shallow waters that fringed the sand-bars, too much surprised at the human intrusion of their neglected water-ways to take immediate flight. It seemed the place for artists and poets, and one pitied the excited seekers for rest, the frequenters of the "resorts," where nature is appreciated chiefly as a background for city costumes. Even the afternoon shower that

drove us to the bank to find partial shelter under the roof of leaves seemed quite conducive to poetry. There was music in the patter on the green shingle above mingling with the splashing of the big drops in the water. There was a depth of atmosphere, a play of shadows, which gave mystical interpretations to bluff, marsh, and forest. So far nature might still be voted friendly; her sermon might still be preached under the three heads, serenity, patience, sublimity.

But when, two hours later, the dark thunder-cloud before us spread into an ominous canopy of blackness, bringing the day to an untimely end while our craft was still three miles away from the village where we had planned to find rest and shelter for the night, poesy fled before the grim advance of fact, and we would gladly have exchanged a dozen poets for one good old-fashioned raftsmen. The Wisconsin River is not an easy water-road for the expert. Its shifting channel is so uncertain that even those familiar with it cannot always follow it safely. But for us amateurs, compelled to row three miles of that uncertain river in the teeth of the terrible storm which was already sending out its forked tongues of lightning and crashing in thunders that seemed to

crack the foundations of the earth and threatened to literally burn up and roll away the heavens as a scroll, the situation had ceased to be interesting, and was becoming ominous.

It was reckless to push forward. The storm was almost upon us. The roar of the wind united with awful dignity the terrible thunder crashes. Land was at least better than water, and so we pulled for *terra firma*, which, before we had reached it, had begun to lose its firmness because it was completely water-soaked. Three miles of pelting rain; three miles of uncertain road; three miles of blinding lightning; three miles of unfathomed mud, lay before us. At first we thought of lanterns, umbrellas, waterproofs and rubber boots, but the first quarter of a mile was enough to have rendered all these useless if we had possessed them, as we did not; and so we groped and floundered, now in the ditch and anon wishing we had stayed in it, holding fast to the hope that village lights would soon lend their provincial guiding. Those were long three miles, measured by the psychometry of the voyagers. Every rag on our bodies became a part of our impedimenta, accentuating the wetness through which we stumbled. The members of

the party who were fortunately caught barefooted had the advantage, for every step they took set the foot in fresh water, while those of us in shoes had to wade in the same water which we carried along in our inadequate foot-vessels. In the midst of this awful storm my thoughtful companion uttered through his chattering teeth, "This is the heart of nature with a vengeance;" and in that blind floundering between the river and Muscoda, in the storm which next day we learned was at that very time floating bridges off their piers, carrying village sidewalks into the middle of the road, floating barns, converting stack-yards into flotillas driven by the wind among drowned cattle and pigs, came the text for this vacation sermon.

Yes, this too is the "heart of nature." Somewhere in the darkness, within three miles of us, was the cozy, cleanly little country hotel with its courteous and sympathetic landlord and warm-hearted, motherly German landlady who were ready upon our arrival to relieve us of our baptismal robes, to give us clean water to wash off the mud, to lend us fragrant linen and pack us off to bed under abundant coverlets, and, furthermore, somewhere in the mysteries of the kitchen, through help of oven and fireplace, to convert the

wetness of our garments into steam, to bake out our shoes, and present our clothes next morning almost dry.

All that was waiting for this storm-tossed band of rest seekers, but it is well to remember that their ancestors faced tempests as severe, were caught in deluges as relentless when there were no brick walls waiting for them, no kitchen fires to dry the garments, no garments to get wet. All men represent in their own inheritance this awful struggle of man with nature. Nature sought to drown him, freeze him, starve him. Nature smote him with its lightning, swamped him with its floods, buried him in its snows, and converted his running blood into solid ice. Man still finds at the heart of nature not only that which is indifferent, but that which seems to be antagonistic to his highest dreams and most splendid hopes. The houses he builds are the toys of the hurricane. The spire he rears in the honor of God is splintered by the lightning and burned like a derisive torch. Man builds bridges for nature to float away. Like Caliban in Browning's poem, our fore elders

“ Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them firm  
With stone and stake to stop she-tortoise,

Crawling to lay their eggs here : well, one wave,  
Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,  
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large tongue,  
And licked the whole labor flat : so much for spite."

Surely, those wiser than Caliban have often  
been compelled to reflect with him,

"One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope."

There is a dispassionate calm, a sublime persistency, a tireless energy, linked order, and magnificent law at the heart of nature, but approaching it from the human side, the soul, ere it reaches these, may encounter what seems a stolid indifference to the ambitions, the longings, the aspirations of the human soul. Caterina, the crushed human flower in George Eliot's "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," beats out the long hours of a windy moonlight, her heart pierced with the awful darts of love, jealousy, remorse, shame ; every fibre of her body, every cell of her brain, filled with torture-fire. Morally and physically she was strained to the highest agony point. All this while the author says :—

"Nature was holding on her calm, inexorable way, in unmoved and terrible beauty. The stars were swinging in their eternal courses ; the tides swelled to the level of the last

expectant weed ; the sun was making brilliant day to busy nations on the other side of the swift earth. What were our little Tina and her trouble in this mighty torrent, rushing from one awful unknown to another ? Lighter than the smallest centre of quivering life in the water-drop, hidden and uncared for as the pulse of anguish in the breast of the tiniest bird that has fluttered down to its nest with the long-sought food, and has found the nest torn and empty."

Who of us has not lived through fearful moments when the sky seemed to mock our human hearts, the sun to blister our souls with its calm and searching insolence, when the earth had no tenderness in her bosom, but rather the cruel indifference of a stranger ? Hours of shame and loneliness,

" When the sky, which noticed all, makes no disclosure,  
And the earth keeps up her terrible composure,"

have come upon us all. Nature seemed unresponsive and her forces unsympathetic, and these are not her passing moods, but her permanent attitude. How indifferent she is to the mother's cry and the father's prayer, how careless of the wavering line that stands for truth and liberty. Wellington at Waterloo prayed for Blücher or night that he might save the weakening line. However it might be about Blücher,

the night would not and did not hurry. England or France, liberty or tyranny, the sun kept his measured pace, and night came not one second before the appointed time. I am persuaded that there is some mistake in the story of Joshua and his contest with the Amorites. I do not believe that the sun stood still upon Gibeon or that the moon halted over the valley of Ajalon in order that the hosts of Israel might avenge themselves upon their enemies. The sun and moon are awfully impartial. Their indifference is sublime. Even the writer of the old record realized what a strain upon human credulity was this claim of partiality on the part of the sun and moon, and he hastened to say, "And there was no day like that before it or after it."

What shall we say of this nature? Shall we say with Browning's Caliban,

"He hath a spite against me, that I know,"

or dare we say in the words which the same poet puts into the mouth of David,

"How good is man's life, the mere living ! how fit to employ  
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy !"

And shall we rise to the climax of the happy shepherd in Saul, and discover in this law the



love adequate to our needs and inspiring to our lives?

We grope toward an answer. First, it is for us to admit the fact that nature is a stern landholder and makes all her tenants pay an exacting rent. At her heart there are terrible forces that ever menace and often destroy the life of man. It is for us to recognize the fact that there are times when the path of human progress is broken by defiles that cannot be crossed, by heights that cannot be scaled. He who sees only the sunny side of nature sees but half, and such a one, reasoning from what he sees, reasons from false premises.

In the second place, before we answer, let us recognize the other fact, that at times man has triumphed. Some men at least have met nature, grappled with her problems, disarmed her opposition. The storm is now met with the protecting wall, the water-shedding roof, and that is because man, who once was exposed to its pitiless beatings, has conquered by virtue of his own right arm. If it is a fight with nature, let us accept the challenge with good heart and fight it out; and in the fighting there may be born out of human experience the assurance that, after all, we

are fighting with a friendly foe, that nature has hidden her blessings far in the forest, high on the mountain-tops, deep in the bowels of the earth. Nature never gives to man her gold and her gems, but she says to him, "There they are ; if you want them you must get them and pay the price therefor." And by the time he has picked the gold out of the mountain, reared a house out of the forest, and dug his fuel out of the coal-mine, he will have found, through the exercise of skill, intelligence, and reliance, that which is more valuable than gold or timber or coal. The wise dervish embedded his unguent in the handles of the dumb-bells, and said to the rheumatic patient, "Use these clubs every day until they are warm, and then the virtue of the medicine will work out through the wood and relieve you of your rheumatism." The prescription was a wise one ; the cure was effected. In the exercise, not in the ointment, lay the secret of the cure. It is good to flee the city throng, to court the solitude of the country long enough at least to realize the pathetic price that humanity is paying for its comforts. How few of us have a realizing sense of how much life, — human life, — love, patience, vitality, and hope, as well as muscle and brain,

it costs to give us a loaf of bread or a pound of butter.

Go stand with the farmer, as I have done in summer, and look out of the window while the storm is levelling acres of grain, almost ready for the sickle. Watch his face when he sadly discovers that the army-worm has entered his field. Count over the price of the most commonplace blessings and be ashamed of your pettiness and your wastefulness, if you can do nothing more.

But you can go a step further and realize at least that human nature, instead of being an alien in this world, is the child of this world: that instead of confronting some force or forces antagonistic in interest and fell in its purposes, it is a part of the mighty system. Human nature is itself nature in its highest manifestation. Human nature is the last fold in the manifold life of this old world of ours. Man has to fight no more and no different enemies than have beset the horse, the bird, and the worm. The seething of the social caldron to-day is the present form of the creative turmoil once expressed in the volcanic fires which gave birth to iron-mines and copper-beds. It is a part of the turmoil that once rolled molten nebulæ into worlds and con-

densed fiery vapor into ordered planets. Realizing this, we come back again, satisfied to accept the serenities and the patience, the harmony and the beauty of the fields. We realize that the benignity of the country rests on conflicts won, that it is the result of achievements born out of struggle, and we willingly turn to the unfinished edges of creation, where God's battle-line is now forming. Here nature is marshalling her best forces on the human field; God is revealing himself most mightily out on the very picket-line of evolution, here in the heart of the city, at the centre of the social compact. Man has mastered storm and lightning, but he has not mastered the passions of his own heart. Thousands of acres in which bramble, noisome weed, and useless brush once grew riot, have been "subdued," to use the farm word. They are "under cultivation," and they are now in grain and grass. But there are thousands of acres in soul-land still growing rank weeds of selfishness, still choked with the brambles of pride and passion, waiting for that subjugation that shall give them over to the grass and grain of refinement, love, helpfulness, and holiness. Let us take this parable of nature in the large and

apply it to the problems we have in hand. Let the country teach us, not only the price of serenity, but also the source of usefulness.

Out of these experiences we return to the old cry of the prophet, emphasized and clarified by the calm of outward nature, the simplicity of the field, the ecstasy of the bird.

“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread ? and your labor for that which satisfieth not ? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good. Let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me : hear, and your soul shall live ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

These “covenanted mercies” are the rewards of righteousness, the fruits of rectitude, the outcome of honest toil and simple living. They are farthest removed from the conceit of the peacock and the frivolity of the butterfly. They are inseparably related to common-sense, to self-denial, sobriety, simplicity ; to the high economies of thought, the perennial inspirations of love.



## THE PEACE OF GOD

The peace of God which passeth all understanding.

PAUL.



## THE PEACE OF GOD

Great peace have they which love thy law : and nothing shall offend them. — PSALM cxix. 165.

WHEN first I began to seek vacations in my surroundings, rather than seek for surroundings that would make for me a vacation, I used to take my journeys afoot. Several times I walked from Chicago to our Wisconsin summer home. In those days I found nature and human nature as responsive to the pedestrian as later they became to the equestrian. Half the delights and most of the surprises in either case come through the familiarity that belongs to one who is stripped of associations, positions, and what other of station or class exclusiveness imprison a man during his working-days. How great is the imprisonment of this investment one can scarcely realize except by escaping from it. When the minister, the man of the city, was laid aside, when there was not even the indefinite name of "Jones" to mark me, then I found the door of familiar intercourse, frank surprise, and simple human cordial-

ity wide open for me on every side. Once, on such a tramp, the Irishman whose horse I had frightened as I lay sleeping under a tree, changed his profanity into a cordial invitation to ride when I appealed to his sense of humor, and after I had rained upon him a shower of questions concerning weather, crops, cattle, and horses, he said : —

“And now may I ask what your business may be?”

“What do you suppose?”

“And sure and I don’t know. I think you must be working for a newspaper company, sir ; a kind of a reporter, I think.”

“No, I am not a reporter. Why should I have any business? Why should I not be travelling through the country for the pleasure of it?”

“Ah! get away wid ye! None but some poor divil of an Irishman would be walking through the country like that unless he was being paid for it.”

The hospitable and jolly farmer was right. Indeed I was being paid for it; paid for it in coin more imperishable than gold, in wealth that could not be taken away from me.

One hot day, after a dusty walk of fifteen miles,

I entered a little country town in northern Illinois, a commonplace little burg of perhaps fifteen hundred souls, through which I had gone by train a hundred times, and which I regarded as one of the prosaic villages that grow up along our Western railways; a town I had thought of as dusty and blistered in hot weather, as sloppy with bottomless mud in wet weather; a town the life of which had seemed always to centre around the dreary "depot," where the day was marked only by the arrival of the trains that brought mail and daily papers from the metropolis. But this day, when the solitary footman penetrated the unattractive business row that presents its ragged by-ways to the railroad, he found to his surprise that all these years he had seen only the back door of the town. The stained and greasy station-house was a business excrescence upon a little town organized around a square which was already assuming the features of a pretty park. Indeed I found that this prairie town consisted of a fringe of business built around a little artificial forest. A heavy chain fence surrounded the square to keep out wagons and furnish a hitching-place for horses. A few rough benches, green grass, and a flowing well which yielded cold water

strongly impregnated with mineral flavors supposed to be medicinal, were the accessories. The memory of this surprise, this unexpected touch of beauty, stayed with me like the memory of a mother's kiss on the forehead of a tired child, like the echoes of a song on the eve of battle. This memory six years later drew me and Jess to it again, and I found delightful rest there for several hours. Jess received good grooming, drink, and feed at the hands of a humane liveryman, while I threw myself on the grass in the leafy heart of this busy country town. Six years had done much for the maples and the elms planted in the rich Illinois soil. Their branches now interlocked. Their shade had become dense. A windmill surmounted the well and the two formed the "waterworks" which enabled the little town to keep its grass in park-like condition. A dozen or more bright red garden settees had taken the place of the rude benches, and the heavy chain fence had been painted. Generous watering-troughs for the horses were provided on the outside. Hitching-posts had been straightened and their number increased. Business had prospered. The gaps along the streets had been filled up, until now the four sides of the little

square were solid with business, ranging from the too many saloons on the one side up through hardware and dry-goods to the millinery shop and the ice-cream stand on the opposite side. The village tavern stood guard on one corner, the bank on another; and the village hall, which aspired to the dignity of an opera house, on the third. All around the park there was a continuous line of country conveyances, ranging from the wagon with hog-racks up through buggies of all descriptions to the horses with side-saddles, upon which the country girls had come to fit their new dresses or buy new bonnets for the "Fourth."

What a delicious four hours did I spend, studying the busy drama of village life from its peaceful and quiet centre, unsuspected and uninterfered with. I watched the squirrels playing in the branches, barking at each other, not afraid to touch the ground where we could confidently look eye to eye. Birds abounded in the airy palaces of leaves overhead. This life was an eloquent tribute to the civilizing power of a central park. What restraint on the part of dogs, small boys with sling-shots, and the owners of guns did the presence of these squirrels and birds

indicate. On the settees old men with crutches beside them smoked and chatted. Tired women with their parcels sat down to wait until their husbands "got through their business." Alas! how many evidences did these four hours offer of the illegitimate "business" that calls for screens behind which wives must not appear. Babies in carriages, with nurse-girls, and babies without either were plentiful. I insinuated myself into the confidence of the three boot-blacks of the town, who had gathered under my elm tree for the purpose of furthering plans to hold the monopoly of the business, not only in this town but in the three or four adjoining railroad stations which they visited daily. They told me they paid their fare up and down the road by blacking the boots of the brakemen. They recounted to me with great satisfaction their success in running their rivals out of business. Their methods were very like those of their elders, as practised in the great metropolis not fifty miles away. One boy they had "thrashed," and he kept out of their way. From another boy they had stolen his kit, and he never had enough to buy the box and brush with which to set up business again. Another stronger and more successful rival they

had bought out by granting him the franchise of certain newspaper routes and the exclusive privilege of selling the local sheet, reserving for themselves the right of selling the city papers. In a measure their "success in business" was as interesting and marked as that of their elder collaborators, the managers of coal, oil, and gas trusts, and barbed wire combines. I might have learned more, but the whistle of an approaching train broke short the interview, and the three "successful and only authorized boot-blacks" of this and adjoining towns hurriedly left "to work the village six miles south."

But there was plenty of life left in that little square. A pair of lovers came hand in hand to eat their candy together. A rosy girl broke away from chattering companions and came and sat not far from me, a safe gray-beard, while she hurriedly pulled an unopened letter from her bosom, read it with flushed face, and returned with a smile that was more intelligible to me than to her companions. I saw husbands join their wives with words of tenderness and deeds of grace that made knightly their farmers' garb. Others came with words so rude and tones so brutal that the park seemed to fade into a forest

primeval where primitive man was sheltered in his savagery. One would have known that it was on the eve of harvest by the number of new rakes, pitchforks, and "fixings" for reapers and mowers that were loaded into the wagons.

"Are you ready now, John?" said a young farmer's wife, who was not faded and did not look jaded, and on that account, I am sorry to say, was an exception. "Yes, after I run down and get a paper." "Wait," she said, "here is a dime left over from the eggs. Get a *Harper's Weekly*. Jenny and Rob will enjoy it so." Presently the brawny young farmer returned with his *Tribune* and *Harper's Weekly* and something larger. He handed them to his wife. She looked into the package, perhaps with more curiosity than I did out of the corners of my eyes. The "something larger" was the current number of the *Century Magazine*. With a flush of delight she exclaimed, "Oh, isn't that splendid!" They went away and left me thinking that they were taking a piece of the park with them, or rather that there was a little central square with shade-trees and birds planted in their home, and that around it the busy activities of field, farm-yard, and garden were organized.



Thus did the drama of this little town unfold itself about me. From eleven to three of that hot day it would seem that the whole circle of the wants, woes, joys, and yearnings of the human heart were exhibited there in countless variety. Something like this occurs every day in every week through the long summer months in that town, which is intersected with roaring railroad trains, girdled with raggedness, surrounded by the noise and hurry and coarseness of tempestuous life. Here was a great peace, the peace of God, cast into the tumultuous life of the world and worldliness. Here was evidence that it is possible to overarch our hurry with calm, and that the heart that is stayed in the thought of the eternal may find quiet and peace in the pressing conflicts of life.

I wish all our Western towns were organized around a square that might become the heart of beauty and the home of peace, but better yet would it be if that village square could be carried onward and planted in the centre of the human soul. Is it not possible to reserve a sacred place at the core of being ever dedicated to quiet, however vigorously the forces of life may eddy around it? Then, like the sea-birds that are

said to sleep upon the wing, the soul can rest in its work, even though it may never rest from its work. Noise and bluster and fatigue bespeak the dissipation and not the efficiency of soul. The great forces of spirit, like those of matter, work silently. The tornado is weak compared to the sunshine, and in the sunshine the actinic ray which reveals itself neither in light nor heat, but in chemic force, was supposed to be the strongest ray until now its potency is known to be underlaid by the still more hidden and mystic ray of Röntgen, that enables us to see through blocks of wood and find the bullet embedded in the bone. The fuss and fog of the engine are made by the worthless steam. It is not the potent but the impotent steam that makes the noise. Were the walls of the cylinder transparent we should see nothing; all would seem still where the power works that pulls the train. The quiet tug of the moon bends the sea. The silent beckoning of the sun curves the sweep of the planets. It is so in life. The undemonstrative Grant was the invincible. The all-conquering Jesus was calm and serene.

The peace of God: Can we analyze it, or at

least discover some of its elements? How are we to secure it?

It is borne in upon us through the calm of nature. I seek my hills, and they fail me not. The trees minister unto me, and my river flows, as ever, for the healing of the heart as well as for the greening of the landscape. Waving corn-fields and fragrant meadows temper the nerve and soothe the heart. From the top of Tower Hill the sun touches with glory the horizon-line cut against the hill-comb fifty miles long. When it realizes such surroundings the soul becomes oriental, sun-worshipping becomes inevitable, and peace is there.

The informed mind is already furnished with an enlarged liturgy when it enters the "temple not made with hands." Now the outcropping stratum becomes a chapter in the book of revelation and the polished pebble a beatitude from the great sermon *of* the mount to which the Sermon *on* the Mount is but note and commentary. To the thoughtful mind the blade of grass is a parable, and the leaf on the tree outdoes all the miracles of ancient scroll. The song of the thrush is a psalm of praise. The soothing chant of the whip-poor-will which visits us nightly at

Tower Hill is nature's doxology, bringing vesper benedictions. Walt Whitman, whose lines are often in my hands in summer time, is a good commentator on this gospel of nature which bespeaks the peaceful and peace-giving God. There is a consolation and inspiration in the lesson he thus teaches : —

“I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey work of  
the stars,

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.”

Again he says : —

“To me every hour of the light and the dark is a miracle,  
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,  
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with  
the same,  
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.”

But the road of intelligence is a long one and sometimes a tangled and briery one. Science is a God-revealer, but not all can be tutored thereby. There are other ways in which nature, which is but a name for the great God of out-of-doors, the reality that lurks in things, may minister peace to all the troublous hearts of men.

Nature preaches the gospel of largeness. It rebukes the petty schemes of man. What a breath from heaven is that whose visible path stretches out before one's eyes into a haze thirty miles away. Holy are the thoughts which the mind flings out upon the mat of green two miles wide and seven miles long, woven from tall tree-tops, which it may look down upon from the summit of our hill tower. The mind regaling itself with this message of the trees joins the breeze in the fanning of corn-fields abundant, in the swaying of forests triumphant, in the rocking of wheat-fields resplendent. Lending my consciousness to the winds, the thanks of neighborhoods are mine. I fan the brow of harvesters, and the cooling breeze becomes in me the breath of God, bringing a "peace that passeth all understanding." When the eye walks over that rug of green its noiseless feet disturb not the nest places of ten thousand birds. Each of those tall trees is a kingdom to some lordly spirit in feathers or fur. The peace of God is in this sense of largeness. Most of the fretting and worrying cares come from a sense of confinement. Folks are in the way. Somebody is taking more room than he ought. He is crowding his neighbor to the

wall, taking his companion's space. This brings discomfort enough when the pressure is a physical one, when the body lacks room to grow in, or chance to bless itself with abundant water, air, and bread; but more intolerable is it when the mind is cramped, when the soul is compelled to live in narrow thought-spaces where the air is stuffy with the ideas of others, and the walls of the soul are converted into prison walls by dogmas, creed words, and test phrases. These traditions limit the horizon, shut out space, exclude the light, and obscure the God who is most often discernible on the horizon-lines of human thought, the far-off hills of human hopes, ay, and in the sombre shadows and solemn soughings of the great trees that grow in the sorrow-forests of the human heart.

It is natural, in speaking of the largeness that brings the "peace of God" into the human soul, to think of the ministrations of the countryside. But the God of space, whose angels are light and air, is not foreign to the city; and though here in Chicago we may not cast our eyes up to the hills "from whence cometh strength," we may turn them toward the lake, whose spiritual values exceed its physical ones.

It suggests a cleanliness, an openness, a freedom wholesome to brains smitten with the gold fever, altogether restful to the heart whose pulsations are strained by the anxieties of trade or the bitterness of unwelcome and therefore ungracious toil. Even in cities less fortunate than Chicago the ever benignant skies bend above the tired and feverish, and not even the dense smoke clouds can wholly debar them by day, still less shut out the heavenly visitants by night. If the city-bound would know "the peace of God that passeth all understanding," they may seek it by help of the unresting and unhasting stars that, through heat and cold, above country and city, keep their unerring way through the fields of space with the rhythmic harmony that suggests the music of the spheres. Says Whitman : —

"I was thinking the day most splendid till I saw what the not-day exhibited,

I was thinking this globe enough till there sprang out so noiseless around me myriads of other globes."

I know not what God is, neither did Paul, "though he be not far from any one of us." But we do know that he is something not smaller than the stars. The infinity of worlds floats in

the infinite Being, and if we would know the calm that lies beyond all the perturbations of the planets and the agitation of minds so much greater than planets that they can weigh them, track them, and anticipate their wanderings, we must learn of all these largenesses. We must expand our minds with broad horizon-lines, open the windows of the soul to the daylight, and not forget those that let in the starlight.

“Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you.

Not till the waters refuse to glisten for you and the leaves to rustle for you, do my words refuse to glisten and rustle for you.”

This brings something of the “peace of God,” who “maketh the sun to shine upon the just and upon the unjust.” Would we know his peace, we must rise by any and all helps to the benignant hospitality which enables us to be fellows with the ant, companions of the robin, playfellows with the dog, comrades that will not betray the trust of the horse. Then the radiance of the sun will shine upon our brows and the solemn vault of our heart-heavens will be studded with stars.

Another way in which nature, the out-of-doors,



may minister to the peace of mind even of the untutored, is through its inevitableness. There is consolation in the law of gravitation beyond the reach of any man-wrought "schemes" of salvation, because we can depend upon it. There is ever a consciousness of something divine in the presence of the inevitable. "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him," said the brave old poet in the book of Job. In the country we are brought into first-hand relations with those forces which we must respect, though they respect not us. From January to January the farmer's eyes are turned to the sky, trying to read therefrom his day's destiny. "Will it rain or shine?" is the ever perplexing question. He cannot change the weather, but all his strength goes to the task of fitting himself into the inevitable. Exorable man adjusting himself to the inexorable God will always find his providence divine.

One morning in one of my vacations I watched from our hilltop the most spectacular approach of a storm I have ever witnessed. Over the rim of the hills thirty miles to the westward a line of gold, a very rivulet of saffron glory, marked the margin of a rising cloud. The colors changed, shivered, and shimmered, becoming a fringe to a

deepening curtain of spreading blackness. Out of its margin the fiery tongues of the lightning darted, but no sound reached our ears. Miles of sunlight lay between us and that semi-transparent cloud-retort in the sky. But momentarily the sunlit spaces narrowed, the clouds big with storms came up from the north and south out of No-man's land and joined by a flank movement the charging squadrons that were moving from the west. The colors changed from vanishing blue to threatening black. Purples and greens and yellows seemed to wait upon the fiery tongues of the lightning. All the while the magnificent array was bearing down upon us at the rate of eight or ten miles an hour. The location of the storm-line was definite, the time of its approach was calculable, the sultry air became cool, then suddenly cold. The last strip of sunlight was annihilated, the valleys were shadowed, the birds flew to cover, the squirrels in the trees gave their nervous bark, as if wishing to impart their anxiety to the human beings they had learned to trust.

By this time the storm was audible as it had been visible. The murmur of leaves had deepened into forest moans. The lightning played with thunder accompaniments. The artillery of

the skies had opened fire. Still the ranks moved on. Presently the first heavy drops began to fall, snapping as they fell like the minie-balls from a skirmish line. Then the whole line volleyed and thundered, and the deluge was. For two tremendous hours and more the world was all wet, and the end seemed at hand, and still even the little birds were not frightened. I think even the restless nerve of the squirrel must have been soothed, and that busy-body was content to keep almost still while, with a degree of deliberation, he barked at the rain. The wet world rested and waited. After the deluge came the rainbow, its promises swiftly followed by fruition. The rain-cloud left, trailing the sunlight after it, and all the world seemed soft with a newness, as if it had that moment dropped out of creation's mould. Nature seemed glad with a freshness just from God. Even the farmer smiled pensively as he looked out upon his over-burdened oat-fields, downed by the storm, never again to rise into the fulness of a crop or the possibility of good harvesting. He has learned to accept the inevitable, though not always, indeed, without grumbling a little. He has learned to live by using nature, and not thwarting her; not expecting to change

the unbending laws, but trying to conform to the "beautiful necessity," as Emerson calls it.

Storms are not always physical ; clouds charged with sorrow as well as with rain darken the horizon of man. Human hopes are swayed by gusts from beyond the horizon-line, even as the forests were. Human plans, heart-dreams, head-schemes are uprooted like the maple trees in the forest; they are broken, snapped, and twisted like the oak branches in the storm. Soul-fields, apparently almost ready for the sickle, are beaten down and the harvest is lost. Perhaps our experience with the first storm may help us to meet the second, at first with grim fortitude, if need be, then with sweet resignation, and at last with triumphant peace. For assuredly, seed-time and harvest do follow each other, and sunshine follows rain ; but who will say that the one is more beneficent than the other? Surely, "the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." And to know the "peace of God" is to rejoice in the ways of God, to accept what cannot be avoided, to revere the inevitable, to utilize the storms if need be, to fill our sails with their tempestuous gales, compelling them to bear even us, upon whose heads they pour their pitiless energy, to

higher calm, the eternal poise and "peace of God."

But highest peace comes through highest resources. As the human heart is higher than the storm-cloud, so the disclosing God reveals through it higher lessons which teach diviner calms. If we would know "the peace of God that passeth understanding" we must seek him in the ministrations of love. The outpourings of the human heart are divine, if all else be demoniac. The babe nestling at mother's breast has found a sacred shelter, a haven of rest, if there be none other. The mother, engirdled by manly love, knows the heaven of the child, and more. The father and mother environed in the sympathy of their neighbors, stayed by the love of their kind, finding their burdens borne by the willing hands and anxious hearts of others, find a still broader heaven; they are invited into the peace of love, the peace of God, the peace that lifts them above their own burdens by teaching them to take up the burdens of others.

I have seen other storms than those that affect fields and forests. I have seen dark visitations of grief, lightning darts that shattered plans, hopes, and life itself. I cannot measure the scope

of the one storm more than the other; I cannot penetrate the mystic outcome of the one more than the other; but in the one case as in the other I have caught glimpses of a glory revealed that before was hidden.

From the slopes of Tower Hill I once watched another storm break from a cloudless sky, overhanging the serene landscape with terrible shadows, rending the air with terror, agony, dismay so awful that it seemed as though life could never again go on and as if the sun never again would shine. And all this storm was inward. The lightning darts were spiritual, the convulsions were of the soul-fields. While young life sported in the waters, dallied with the river in innocent recreation after a thoughtful day, the danger-line was passed, the unsuspected but treacherous sands gave way to the deep place where life was in jeopardy. A moment's struggle, a few moments of intrepid battling by manly arms, and two young lives had gone out of the lives that held them so closely, two bodies had sunk beneath the current that in a moment was changed from playful beauty to awful doom. One of the lives thus wrenched from its loved moorings was that of a great-hearted, noble-purposed, high-aimed maiden

whom we loved and trusted, who so merited life by her large purposes and the earnest of faithful preparation. The other was a youth who up to that moment was a stranger. "My God, I must save that life!" he exclaimed, and plunged in to rescue the life he knew not, and lost his own, changing in a moment, with uncalculating willingness, youth, health, life, and love for duty and death. For two days and two nights we saw fifty men leaving their unreaped grain in the field, their unattended business in shop and at desk, searching in unremitting toil for the lifeless body of one whom they had never known or seen, one who belonged by ties of blood to those three hundred miles away, whom they knew not and never expected to see.

In consequence of that storm the heart yielded an abundant harvest of love, life was watered by sympathy, quickened into nobleness by tears. The fields of the soul were fertilized, and will bring forth richer harvests farther on. The storm-swept gardens of God were enriched, and the peace of God crept into many a heart. Faces of toiling men and toiling women, the common folk of the country-side, untutored by the school and for the most part unconfessed

by the church, shone through that storm with the radiance of the Mount. The faces of unbaptized ones were transfigured because they were christened of the spirit, made radiant by love. Love paid for the loss of crops and neglected business. Love, in and through that storm, touched those valley-dwellers with the peace of God that mellowed their lives and hallowed their thoughts for many a year to come.

Oh, it was a terrible storm. All the runways of our lives became suddenly torrent-laden, our spirits were saturated with grief; but, as a consequence, sacred spots have been multiplied, the number of holy places has been increased in the world, and we have walked on holy ground where before we had walked in irreverence and thoughtlessness. The legacy left us by the radiant maiden already gilds with sacramental halo that which before seemed of the common and commonplace. She has tested the adequacy of the faith in the love that now is and the more abundant love we call death.

If life is given to enrich life, if we are here to ameliorate the hard conditions, to soften prejudices, to weaken bigotries, to widen sympathies, in short, to enlarge the boundaries of life and



to make more beautiful this world-home of ours, who dare say that the young man did not choose well? There was a magnificent triumph in that defeat, there is a perennial potency in such a disappointment. The gardens of God bloom the brighter for that act of self-forgetfulness. That youth added a noble stone to the wall of the slowly rising cathedral, the temple of human excellence, the church of the holy deed, the home of the loyal. The manly impulse was transplanted into a hundred young hearts in that country-side. With electric haste and potency the story was flashed from one end of the land to the other. I believe in the contagion of excellence. The fructifying power of such nobleness is guaranteed by the same law that holds the planets in their places, and brings the flowers of spring and the fruits of autumn.

Yes, the peace of God was in the storm. It was the profound peace that rests at the heart of Niagara. That mighty body, gathered from its one hundred and fifty thousand square miles of lake and river, that drainage of half a million square miles of hills and valleys, takes its tremendous leap of more than one hundred and sixty feet, pouring its eighty-five million tons

of water per hour. And underneath there is silence, a calm at the heart of it. It spoke its own language in the soul of Charles Dickens when it taught him to say, "The first and lasting effect of the tremendous spectacle was peace, peace of mind, calm recollections of the dead, great thoughts of eternal rest and happiness." And this peaceful and peace-giving torrent has gone on measuring the mighty floods of Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Superior, draining the limitless fields of the great northwestern basin without break or plaint, sending up its perpetual incense of vapory adoration to the sun through an antiquity which Lyell says antedates the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Himalayas. The tourist who ventures behind the veil of this tremendous waterfall finds that his own voice is more penetrating than this voice of the eternal ages, and he can readily converse with his guide. Surely here the troubled soul can say, in the words of the hymn:—

"Oh, how still is the working of His will."

May we not find in this mighty spectacle of nature some hints that will help us enter into this "peace that floweth like a river," this "peace that passeth all understanding?"

The fall of the great river sublimely illustrates the point I have already urged. The resistlessness of Niagara is restful and peace-giving because of the abundant supply ; there is plenty of water to keep it going. Jutting crags may obtrude and churn the surface into whirlpools, but these are trifling incidents in the career of the stately river, for it comes out of unfailing sources, and it travels into the all-capacious bosom of the fathomless sea ; and when we realize that the ever precipitant intensity of our lives is fed from the exhaustless fountains of being, and is tending toward the all-widening and deepening ocean of truth, we too become, like the Niagara, peaceful and irresistible. The head waters of the St. Louis of the North are some twelve hundred miles away from Niagara, and still the remotest spring in that far-off British-American wilderness is a constant pressure and present power at the heart of Niagara. More remote than the head waters of the St. Louis of the North from Niagara, are the fountains of human life that feed the torrent of feeling, the cataract of thought, that is poured through our being. From the heights of Ararat and from the foot of the still remoter Himalayas of India, sprang those foun-

tains of Semitic inspiration and Brahminic meditation that even yet flow through our lives. So, also, do the Hebrew psalmist's trust and the Greek poet's serenity flow through our feeling, and as behind us there presses the contribution of the ages, before us there waits the measureless Pacific of truth, the unattained ocean of love, the ever surging sea of unrealized life. Why should there not be in our lives consciously something of that unconscious peace that lurks at the heart of Niagara? There is peace there because so much of the battle was fought beyond the painted rocks of Lake Superior. There is pure water at the rapids, the foam rises milk-white, because the mud and wash of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota have been deposited at the bottom of the Great Lakes. The malarial waters of our prairies have been clarified by the winds of Mackinac, filtered through the Straits of Sault Ste. Marie. What is the Niagara of our lives but an accumulation of those waters that have fought their way hither through the rapids of Greece and Rome, and the European centuries of Christian struggle? Should we not transform our turmoil into calm as we realize that before us opens the great ocean, the boundaries

of which we cannot foresee, the depths of which we cannot fathom? for if we could, it would cease to be the sea. Content let us be to know that we are ever tending toward the eternal waters.

Let not my similes tyrannize over us. Let river and park be forgotten. I leave my sermon at the last in the words of my sublime text, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Only those who do love this law with an absorbing self-abandonment, those to whom duty becomes a law of gravitation, enabling the soul to fling itself into a struggle for the right as freely as Niagara throws itself over the mighty precipice, gain this peace, and those who have gained it are always peaceful. To such there can be no defeat. In such lives righteousness and peace kiss as in the dream of the psalmist. The peace of God is this peace of conflict, the peace of motion, the serenity of action. It is the park in the heart of business, the beauty in trade. Higher than life in the human heart is the thirst after righteousness. When nature's haunts and love's consolations fail, duty still remains to bring peace to millions of souls. Only he who has learned that God is one with goodness passes through the final gates into glory. He

knows the Shekinah, the visible glory, the God made manifest.

What did Paul the persecuted, the valiant fighter, know of peace? What did Luther, defying devils at Worms, know of peace? What did John Brown on the Harper's Ferry gallows know of peace? What did Jesus on the cross know of peace? They knew more than all seekers after success, more than all those who compromise with the clearness of their convictions, more than the temporizers for the sake of dollars, for the sake of numbers, even for the sake of usefulness; more than all those who shrink from pain and who think happiness the best thing to give or the best thing to get, while God's truth is in jeopardy and the liberty of soul is still pawned. Only those know the peace of God who have chosen the rugged way of duty rather than the apparently smooth path of prosperity and of comfort. Duty is the upper road to God. He who takes it promptly meets the eternal. His peace comes to its ultimate completeness only in the councils of justice, in the triumphs of freedom and of right.

All this is but groping toward the deeper meaning of my text. I know not the whence

nor the whither of life. I am sure only that the one as the other is mysteriously sheathed in divinity. The grave is no more inexplicable than the cradle. Science may trace the process of evolution to lowest forms, prophecy may dare to anticipate the future, but origin and destiny are a part of the eternal mystery, the thought of which is allied to the eternal peace of God.

Death, then, like birth, we salute as friend; the revealer, the peace-giver, the universal attendant of life, the sweet solemn angel, we hail as a messenger from on high. With Emerson we will still gird ourselves for life and not for death:—

“ As the bird trims her to the gale,  
I trim myself to the storm of time,  
I man the rudder, reef the sail,  
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime :  
‘ Lowly faithful, banish fear,  
Right onward drive unharmed ;  
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,  
And every wave is charmed.’ ”

And with Browning, —

“ At noonday in the bustle of man’s work-time  
Greet the unseen with a cheer !  
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be.  
‘ Strive and thrive ! ’ Cry ‘ Speed, — fight on, fare ever  
There as here ! ’ ”





## THE UPLANDS OF THE SPIRIT

So call not waste that barren cone  
 Above the floral zone,  
 Where forests starve :  
 It is pure use ; —  
 What sheaves like those which here we glean and bind  
 Of a celestial Ceres and the Muse ?

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Hither we bring  
 Our insect miseries to thy rocks ;  
 And the whole flight, with folded wing,  
 Vanish, and end their murmuring, —  
 Vanish beside these dedicated blocks,  
 Which who can tell what mason laid ?

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Mute orator ! well skilled to plead,  
 And send conviction without phrase,  
 Thou dost succor and remede  
 The shortness of our days,  
 And promise, on thy Founder's truth,  
 Long morrow to this mortal youth.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

## THE UPLANDS OF THE SPIRIT

Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. — PSALM. lxi. 2.

THE bluff country of the upper Mississippi and its tributaries is becoming more and more precious to the Western eye, accustomed to the fertile monotony of prairie levels. These uplands minister to soul as much as they refresh the body. The Mississippi Valley yields never a mountain from the Alleghanies to the Rockies, but these bluffs display the rugged chisellings of nature. They disclose the edges of the geologic leaves in the great book that tells the story of creation. Their summits are high enough to deepen the breath and quicken the pulse of the climber, to sharpen the edge of the senses and give new zest to the mind. The never satisfied quest of the living soul is for a view, a fresh angle from which to study the face of things, a longer vista of field and forest, an opportunity of looking down on the winding ways of men and women, over and into the toils and the joys of

brothers and sisters. There is great help to the spirit in a view properly appropriated.

In the Blue Mounds we find Wisconsin's humble substitute for a mountain; I say a substitute, for it is one to be graciously and joyously accepted; for he who has no eye for a hillock may never enjoy the hill, and he who despises the bluff, with its five hundred feet of altitude above the winding river, its glorious expanse carpeted with green fields, rugged with cattle-pastures, and dotted with villages, will probably have little more than conventional enthusiasm and fashionable compliment for the White Mountains or the Rockies. This summit is the second highest point in Wisconsin, the first in availability and attractiveness. A flinty cap some sixty or eighty acres in extent has protected the top of this mound from the slow chisellings of nature, which through untold ages have excavated and lowered the surface of all the surrounding country. This exceptional plateau remains six or seven hundred feet higher than all the bluffs of that region, and some fourteen hundred feet above the level of Lake Michigan. Its woody sides form the conspicuous landmark of every wide view obtainable in the four or five neighboring counties.

To this much-neglected, unheralded, and underestimated summit our party travelled. For one hundred and fifty miles it was our objective point, and our drive was rewarded. From this upland of nature the eye scans an unbroken horizon-circle forty or more miles in diameter. Only the limits of the human eye and the curved line of the old earth obstruct the vision. We looked down, not only upon the marvellous combinations of curve and color enriched by the ever-shifting shadow lines, but also upon the homes of toiling men and women. From our rocky height we caught great hints concerning little lives, broad suggestions about narrow spheres, and our minds wandered off on high mountains over lowly doings. Even these few hundred feet of superior altitude caused division fences and section lines to fade away. From this height political animosity, party distinctions, sectarian rivalries, and even race lines, formed no part of the greater landscape. We could not resist the temptation to count the spires that pierced the carpeting green, but we never thought of asking whether they were Protestant or Catholic, Methodist or Baptist. It was easy to take them at their best. In them we saw typified the aspira-

tions of that quiet country-side. It was easy to believe in them all as having power to cast helpful shadows over stricken lives. We counted the villages, traced the winding path of the railroad, and thought of the great waves of commerce that broke in little ripples on the side of the gracious hill. Even from the altitude of Blue Mounds the railroad ceased to suggest monopoly, extortion, or the sharp conflict between capital and labor, and became instead a sympathetic link between that rustic little world and the great pulsing world of commerce beyond. The radiating lines of railways became the restive antennæ of the great social organism on the back of which we seemed to ride.

At night we saw the sun sink into a golden sea, and we waited upon the little world below us with its tired harvesters to bed. We saw the stars come out, one by one, and thought of the restless babes and anxious mothers to whom, perchance, the holy night brought no rest and to whom the "unhasting and unresting stars" gave no sleep. We were there when the sun, prompt to its engagement, made "when first the morning stars sang together for joy," came out of the molten sea of shimmering vapor, touching with light the state-

house dome twenty miles away, awakening again the little world at our feet to care, to toil, to another day's struggle and another day's weariness.

How different was this scene from those habitual to the farm dwellers below ; and still we were but a few miles away and but a few hundred feet above them. How this change of altitude changed the accent in our spiritual pronunciation, the emphasis in our thought. What seemed so important below became trifling ; what in the valley we scarcely saw at all, or seeing gave little thought, on the hilltop became the central points in life. That farmer, walled in by great banks of green on every side, made the barn the pivotal point around which his life did largely move, and the days of the wife circled in conscious tyranny around the milk-house. But from the near hilltop it was evident that the rustic schoolhouse, half hid in the trees at the cross-roads, was more focal to that farm home than the stables ; and the little country church, with its pine spire, was more central than the spring-house. Somehow the little ragged graveyard touched their lives more intimately than the stack-yard. As we came down from the Blue

Mounds we began to realize that the truer thought was inseparably connected with that rarer view, and our missionary impulse took form in a great desire to persuade people to climb and see the view; for if the dwellers in the valley would but climb even that gentle slope, and catch a glimpse of the broader prospect, their homes and lives would settle into their more fitting perspective.

As we tried to tell the story of our night on the hill to the over-worked farmer by the roadside, he unblushingly confessed, "I was born under the brow of Blue Mounds; I have lived under their shadow all my life, but I have never climbed to their summit." For thirty years this lift of soul, this mind and heart opener had been within his easy reach, but he had never lifted his feet toward it. May the story of this self-imposed poverty prove a warning, and the thought of this narrowed life quicken within us the prayer of the psalmist, —

"Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I,"

from the top of which I may make a truer survey of the domains I call my own, where I may more justly estimate the things that absorb my



time and enlist my energy, where I may realize how unworthy are my days and how inadequate are my loves, how petty my plans and ungrateful my tears.

There are Blue Mounds of the intellect within easy reach of all, in the shadows of which we were born and reared, which, if we would but climb them, would free us, for the time being at least, from the dogmatism and bigotry, the clanking chains of ignorance and selfishness, that now bind us. Perchance there is a book on our shelves, or within buying or borrowing distance, — it may be an essay of Emerson, a poem of Lowell, or a lecture by Tyndall, — which, mastered, would prove a veritable Blue Mounds of the spirit, giving our thoughts a wider horizon than ever they had before, making it ever after a little less easy to think meanly of our neighbors, or speak complacently of our own acquirements and the outcome thereof. What did Channing and Emerson, Browning and Martineau do for themselves? They climbed the Blue Mounds in the sight of which they were born. They climbed the highest hill within their reach, and there obtained the broader view. What are they doing for us and for the world? They simply testify

to us how things look from the top of the Blue Mounds, and invite us to climb ; and if we follow their beckoning our lives are enlarged. Those we call the great leaders of thought, such as Darwin, Max Müller, Herbert Spencer, are such because they have prayed the prayer of the psalmist, —

“ Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.”

They themselves climbed the Blue Mounds, and from the summit have beckoned others to the inspiring prospect.

But there are other Blue Mounds than those of the intellect, separable from them in thought, if not in fact. More available and more alluring than these heights of thought are the hilltops of the heart, — the Blue Mounds of the affections. Alas, how many of us are like the Wisconsin farmer, living all our lives in the shadow of heights which would flood us with beauty, introduce us to unspeakable and immeasurable glory ; but we have never found it convenient to climb to the tempting summit, hence our hearts shiver in selfish isolation in the valleys below while the hillslope above is flooded with sunlight. Many a loveless life is desolate because it has never

climbed the Blue Mounds of the heart. If we would love, we must go where love is. The Presbyterian and Baptist neighbors can continue to distrust one another only by keeping apart. To walk together upward toward the summit will break down theological exclusiveness without an argument, without text or syllogism. The so-called broadening tendencies in religion come largely, not from the wise arguments of the scholars, but from the Blue Mounds of the heart, the uplands of feeling. The exclusiveness of Christian pretensions holds good until from some Blue Mounds of the heart we spy a lovely pagan, or catch sight of a tender heathen. Once the vision breaks upon our eyes, nevermore can we find the old comfort in the exclusive gospel, never again can we believe so confidently in the special revelation, or trust so unquestionably the thought that God wrote his mind out in one book only, or that his redemptive power is limited to one saviour alone. Madame Leon-owens went as a teacher to the court of the king of Siam, hoping that she might convert the entire royal household to Christianity, but there she found gentle women, lovely lives, finding daily strength at the flower-decked shrines of Buddha.

Legge went to China with his Christian lore, hoping to supplant the poorer native thought with his rarer importation of the spirit, but to his surprise he found there such noble moralists, such great maxims, such high teachings, that he gave his life to the work of bringing Chinese classics within reach of English readers. Edwin Arnold went to teach English wisdom to India boys at Poona. He found them already touched more or less consciously with the Light of Asia, and he, like Madame Leonowens, Professor Legge, and many others, came back to teach Europeans and Americans to climb with them the Blue Mounds of the heart, and to feel evermore that God has gemmed this round world with gentle lives, that every land is bedewed with the tears of tender ones.

Frenchmen and Englishmen, each living in the valley of prejudice, embitter their generation with national distrust and enmity, but Taine climbed the Blue Mounds and attained such an understanding of the English heart revealed in English song and poem that he was able to give to the Englishman himself what is as yet, all things considered, the best interpretation of English literature. On the other hand, when the Parisians

were left starving for bread after the German siege of 1871, it was an English poet delving among the neglected French archives, who found and told the story of the simple heroism of Hervé Riel, the Breton sailor that balked the English fleet; and he did it so well that he was able to send a hundred pounds, the price of the poem, to the Paris relief fund. Robert Browning had climbed the Blue Mounds of the heart. He could no longer be content with the stupid hatred of the French, but invited his countrymen upward and taught them to pray, —

“Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.”

O you with the cruel scorn upon your lip, the harsh word upon your tongue, the bitter feeling in your heart, remember you are but a valley dweller. Lie no longer lazily in your complacency, but rise and climb out of your darkened valley toward the Delectable Mountains over which broods the loving spirit, where nestles the appreciative mind, from the top of which it is impossible to hate, and you become incapable of meanness.

But there are still other heights more available and if possible more neglected than those of

thought and feeling. I mean the Blue Mounds of duty, the heights of disinterestedness, the table-lands of sacrifice. We are all born under the brow of these heights, reared in plain view of the summit, and yet, like the Wisconsin farmer, we are each forced to admit, I have never found time to go to the top. My feet have never walked the blue heights where self is lost in infinitude, personality merged in the eternal, and life forgets its limitations as it tides joyously outward into the lives of others. Duty is the great vision-giver, the great peace-maker, the great strength-restorer. Without it the privileges of culture, leisure, home, and all that pertains thereto, have in them little to make life worth living.

Duty is a hilltop word. It can never be fully understood except by those who frequent the uplands of the spirit. There is a temptation to make the narrow vision appear scientific; there are those who love to reiterate the worn-out maxim that "self-preservation is the first law of nature," a maxim more and more challenged by science and already so qualified that it ceases to be a law of nature and becomes instead an apology of man. Others delight in reminding us that

“duty, like charity, begins at home,” and so they fain would do their duty by excusing themselves from it. These cherished maxims must be taken up into the Blue Mounds of the spirit, the uplands of consciousness, before we can read anything out of them but a lie, a blighting lie at that. The moment that we attempt to care for ourselves in a way that has no care for the larger self, the truth of God, the triumph of the right, we begin to die like a girdled tree, and all the currents of the life-giving sap are interrupted. Any duty or charity that begins and ends in a home untouched by the hilltop interpretation of that home, hurts those it would bless and blights what it would sanctify. Alas for the child growing up in the home that centres in his little wants and narrow dreams. That child is orphaned whose indulgent parents move in the petty orb of the child’s selfishness or self-interest. The parent who would be parent indeed to his children must be more than a servant to them, he must pray the prayer, —

“Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.”

Are we not coming very near the kernel of the New Testament gospel? Are we not finding the

secret, the open secret of Jesus? Did he not climb the rock that is higher than his selfish needs or indulgent concern for surroundings? And are we not coming very near to the central meaning of the church? Is there not here a hint of its indispensable work, the one thing alone which justifies its existence? When it fails to become a Blue Mounds in a prairie country it had better not be. When its altars cease to represent the uplands of the spirit from the top of which the devotee may catch broader intellectual outlooks, wider heart horizons, and clearer views of duty, it had better have no altars.

But in all these cases there are no outlooks available except to those who are willing to climb. The fatigues and exposures of the ascent must be faced. There are no patent-incline railroads by which tourists can be landed upon the summit of the uplands of the spirit, as there are upon Mount Washington, Mount Rigi, and other favored resorts of high altitude. There are none such to the Blue Mounds, by which I would symbolize the church of God, the church of consecrated thought and holy living. This church has no blessing for those who fear the strain and who would avoid the dan-



ger of climbing. And this climbing is not to be achieved by any active outward demonstrations. It is not a matter of generous almsgiving or diligent hand-helpings, though these are involved. It means the harder thing, the more generous judgment, the more temperate enjoyment, the more thoughtful elevation of essentials, and the elimination of the non-essentials, the decorations of life. Our modern life is burdened with its so-called charitable organizations and charitable workers, who run up and down the world trying to save it by machinery. The world is not to be saved by institutions. It is to be saved by illumination, the overflow of light, the diffusion of hilltop radiance. The Blue Mounds rise into sterility, the growth on the top is stunted, but its use is not to be tested by its capability of growing corn or potatoes. As a mountain, so with churches. The non-productive lands, measured by our dollar-and-cent standards, are the most available. They are the most useful that give the highest life, the largest outlook. Let the church as well as the man say,

“ Not on the vulgar mass

Called ‘work,’ must sentence pass,

Things done, that took the eye and had the price.

“ O’er which, from level stand,  
The low world laid its hand,  
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice ;

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Thoughts hardly to be packed  
Into a narrow act,  
Fancies that broke through language and escaped :

“ All I could never be,  
All men ignored in me,  
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.”

The venerable Professor Lesley of Philadelphia, on retiring from the presidency of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at its annual meeting in 1885, made a great plea for the value of what is known among scientists as “dead work,” that is, work that requires trouble, patience, and endurance, that yields little or no apparent results, but without which results would not be forthcoming. Said the toilful geologist, “The dead work which every great discoverer has had to carry for years and years unknown to the world at large before the world was electrified by his appearance as its genius, is the important condition of success.” This is the dead work to which the church must consecrate itself, the patient living, the

decent doing, the self-sacrifice grown to be so habitual that it becomes life's joyous, daily path.

Hurried and restless is the life, however abundant in its outward conditions, that rises every morning in new perplexity as to whether selfish inclination or high duty shall decide the day's action, when duty comes into conscious conflict with the brilliant opportunity, the rare chance, or the gay time. Tiresome are the days spent in trying to do no more than one's "share" of the world's work, in admitting as few as possible of the great truths of life, while, on the other hand, quiet and restful and calm is the life, however busy and outwardly burdened, of him who wakes each morning to the simple tasks of the uplands, to follow the mountain paths of duty. He whose word is as good as his bond, and whose promises are as sure as human strength and promptness can make them, knows but few of the distractions of life. On these uplands of the spirit, the Blue Mounds of the soul, he will wake to the fact that each one's "share" of the world's work is simply to do all that he can, in every way he can, in every place he can, all the time he can, to

help the world along; and this he must do, though all the rest of the world were content to live in indolence under the shadow of the Blue Mounds whose summit they refuse to climb.

I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke:  
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my  
brain

And pronounced on the rest of his handwork — returned him  
again

His creation's approbation or censure: I spoke as I saw:

I report, as a man may of God's work — all's love, yet all's  
law.

Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty  
tasked

To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was  
asked.

Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid  
bare.

Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite  
Care!

Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?

I but open my eyes, — and perfection, no more and no less,

In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God

In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.

And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew

(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)

The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,

As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.

ROBERT BROWNING.



















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